



## DOS – Rarity Form Description Examples

Here are some examples of good and bad descriptions.

### **Firecrest**

Firecrest is our most often claimed rarity, but also our most poorly described with few records being accepted by the Rarities Committee. So here is a good description noting the differentiators for Firecrest over Goldcrest.

“I was walking down the east side of Carsington Water doing one of my occasional perimeter counts and had reached the bottom of Oldfield Lane when I raised my bins to check a movement in a hawthorn. Much to my surprise I saw the boldly striped head of a Firecrest. I watched it for about 10 seconds and then another 15 seconds or so a few minutes later. It called once a three note see-see-see distinctly clearer and stronger than the call of Goldcrest of which I had heard several over the preceding couple of hours. I didn't see it again but heard what I assume was the same bird about 100m further along the footpath. Small bird the same size as Goldcrest but with a much more strongly patterned face. Black eye stripe with white above and below (shading to pale grey) and a black border to the orange-yellow crown. Upperparts a stronger green than Goldcrest with a bronzy patch on the shoulder. Wings dark with a straight pale wingbar lacking the kink of Goldcrest. Underparts off white very different from the pale olive of Goldcrest. Fine black bill. Legs appeared dark. I understand that it was subsequently seen on 1 November by another observer”

And a poor description giving no differentiators, consequently giving the Rarities Committee nothing to go on:

“Firecrest called several times as I walked past churchyard.”

Although not seen, had the observer described the call and why it differed from Goldcrest it would have significantly increased the chances of acceptance.

### **Great Northern Diver**

“Picked out on scan of reservoir and immediately recognised as a diver being larger and heavier than Cormorants and GCG also present and wide white chest and neck as the bird was initially head on. Used the scope to distinguish between GND and BTD. Heavy build. dark and white contrast and horizontal head and bill distinguished from RTD. Large heavy diver with stout pale grey bill darker at the tip. Sharp angled peak on forehead and distinctive white notch on neck. Sat low in the water with very little of the flank showing and no white flash towards the rear end of the flanks typically seen in BTD”

Again, good differentiators.



## DOS – Rarity Form Description Examples

### **Iceland Gull**

This description is interesting because it goes through confusion species and discounts them with observed features and discusses the observation in relation to the latest taxonomic ideas. It also contains evidence of looking to see if there were other records for this species in the UK at the time.

“The following is my recollection of my initial sighting necessarily brief due to the duration of observation: Size and shape - similar to a small to medium sized Herring Gull several of which were nearby for comparison; shape was more elongated at the rear with a noticeably long primary projection beyond the tail this being longer than the bill length - this was different to the shorter primary projection shown by the Herring Gulls. The head shape was rounded more so than Herring Gull recalling Common Gull. The bill was proportionately significantly smaller than Herring Gull being shorter and slimmer. Plumage - upper parts uniform pale grey paler than the Herring Gulls adjacent more similar in shade to Black-headed Gull. The visible folded primaries were unmarked white making them stand out amongst the surrounding gulls which had black primaries with small white tips. The head and neck were whitish with some dusky markings making the head look 'dirty' rather than 'clean'. The visible underparts were white. The bird was only seen swimming and not in flight. I am familiar with hybrid gulls resembling Iceland Gull the most relevant being the Herring / Glaucous Gull hybrid known as 'Viking Gull'. The size and structure of the subject bird discounted 'Viking Gull' together with the unmarked white primaries which were carefully examined for darker grey marks / shading none of which were visible unlike 'Viking Gull'. There is a slight possibility that this could have been a white-winged type 'Kumlien's Gull' but since this is treated as a sub species of Iceland Gull in the latest publications the identification to species is still valid. N.B. It is likely that this bird was the same as that regularly roosting at Chacewater during December as it was not recorded on the 22nd December.”

### **Photographs of Sound Recordings**

One way of supporting your claim is with photographs or recordings, so if you have any do not forget to send them in.