

Run, Grebe, Run

When a boy western grebe loves a girl western grebe very much . . .

No, wait. Let me try that again.

When a girl western grebe is suitably impressed with the courtship attempts of a boy western grebe (in which the two birds mirror each other's movements during a complicated choreography of neck movements, splashes and specific calls), the waterfowl will float side by side, rear themselves up to their full height and then do something that looks like it ought to be impossible:

They sprint together across the surface of the water.

God gave western grebes lobed (not webbed!) feet, and attached those feet at the rear of the grebe's body instead of underneath (unlike ducks). During their synchronized sprint, their feet strike the water around 20 times per second, propelling the birds across the water's surface for 20 yards in a physics-defying display.

Evolution doesn't offer a compelling explanation for why these birds would develop such an elaborate courtship ritual—but that's because it isn't a product of evolution. It's yet another wonder of God's creation.

Pictured: western grebe
(*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)



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Photography by James Capo*