

5-91-9

Species: REDDISH EGRET
(Vernacular name)Egretta rufescens
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 5/27/91 Time Bird Seen: 11:15 am to 12:00 NoonLocality: Adobe Creek Res (Blue Lake), Kiowa Co., Colo
(north of Las Animas)
Nearest town, county and state:Optical equipment: Bushnell 10x Binoculars; Bushnell 60mm Scope (20-45x)If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: N/ANumber of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: dark phase adultLight conditions: bright sunlightDistance from bird, and how measured: estimate 100 yds - 200 yds

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Feeding behavior was unusual. When actively feeding, bird ran around wildly in shallow water with one or both wings extended, stabbing at small fish.

In flight, wingbeat was quite slow and deliberate. Bird flew with head & neck folded back on body in typical heron fashion. Did not fly with neck extended even for a short distance.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Lake shoreline on arid plains. Shoreline very "open" with little or no vegetation.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Carl Overman, Detroit, MI; Duane Nelson, Golden, CO; Warren Finch,
Lakewood, CO; Peter Grant, Boulder, CO; Mark Janos, Pueblo, CO.

Des. Be in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Overall appearance was a dark, slender, medium-sized heron.

Bird was distinctly 2-colored: Head and neck were reddish, and body, wings, etc were bluish-gray. The demarcation between the reddish neck and bluish body was sharp, not ~~grad~~ gradation. With the red ending in a "V" on the breast. Red feathers on breast had a "shaggy" appearance; neck/head not particularly "shaggy".



Legs were bluish; eye was light-colored (white or yellow).

Bill was pinkish for the basal $\frac{1}{3}$ or so, and blackish on the outer $\frac{2}{3}$. Did not appear to be a sharp dividing line between the pink and black. Bill was quite long.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: None heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Little Blue Heron: While head and neck are somewhat different color than body, it is a more subtle difference. The head and neck are purplish-red or bluish-red and the body is a dark gray-blue. Color contrast on this bird was much greater with head and neck being a distinct reddish ~~or~~ or reddish-brown color.

Feeding behavior ("canopy feeding") is much more typical of Reddish Egret than of L.B.H. Base of bill appeared to be pink rather than bluish or gray.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Have seen both, most recently in Southern Florida in April '91

This report was written from notes made during ☒ after ☒ observation; from memory ☐.

NAME (print): Dick Schottler

Mailing address: 25 S. Indiana Pl., Golden, CO 80401

Signature: Dick Schottler

Return to:

~~Hugh E. Kingery~~
~~869 Milwaukee Street~~
Denver, Colorado 80206

5-91-9

26500 Baldwin
Dearborn Heights, Mi. 48127
June 29, 1991

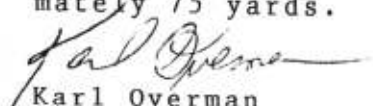
Re: Reddish Egret in Colorado

Dear Duane,

I have enclosed what I think are my two most useful photos of the Reddish Egret and even they leave much to be desired. Nonetheless to my eye they seem to confirm the identification. As they are Ektachrome slides, they will deteriorate considerably in quality in 10 years so you might want to consider making duplicates if needed for an archives.

On May 27, 1991 I was in the vicinity of La Junta, awaiting the time to look for the Black Rail with Don Bridge et. al, including yourself. As this was set for 10 am I spent the early morning at Blue Lake north of Las Animas. When I arrived at the lake it was overcast, windy and surprisingly cold. The last area I check out at the lake was the east side. I drove as far as I dared given the sand. Looking with my 10X40 Zeiss binoculars, I could see a distant heron in the extreme north east corner of the lake. There were no people near the bird on a lake otherwise crowded with fisherman. The bird was motionless. I could tell virtually nothing about the bird other than it looked dark and smaller than a Great Blue Heron through my binoculars. Through my scope (25 power) the heron had a dark body (back and belly) with what I thought was a purplish neck and head with a bicolored bill. I identified the bird as an adult Little Blue Heron, a bird I have seen hundreds of times all over North and South America. As it was 9:25 am, I had no time to walk out to the bird as I had to be at Bent's Old Fort at 10 am to meet the group looking for Black Rail, so I left believing I had seen a good Colorado bird--Little Blue Heron (I was spending a week birding in Colorado primarily to build up my state list).

Folk We I got to Bent's Old Fort, I mentioned to Mark Janos that I had seen a Little Blue Heron at Blue Lake. After successfully seeing the Black Rail. Then of us, including, yourself, Duane Nelson. Two more later joined us. When we got to Blue Lake it was now blue skies. I looked in the corner of the lake where I last saw the bird and was chagrined to see no bird and to see a pickup truck stuck in the sand near where I had last seen the bird. Fortunately I quickly spotted the bird, this time considerably closer to us. With a closer view and better light, the two toned bill was pink with a black tip, not blue with a black tip. I asked the others why was not this bird a Reddish Egret? The answer was, it was. The vinaceous head and neck did not seem as shaggy as Reddish Egrets I had seen in adult plumage before and it did not look quite as frosty as Reddish Egrets in adult plumage often look to me (I have seen Reddish Egrets at least 20 times before, most recent on April 28th on Sugarloaf Key). Dark blue gray body. The "reddish" neck feather were quite shaggy at the base. Pale yellow or white eyes. Legs were gray. After about 10 minutes the bird started running around in the water and canopy feeding in a way typical of a Reddish Egret. We spent approximately an hour walking up the beach, following the bird and stopped when it flew to the north side of the lake. Our closest approach was approximately 75 yards.


Karl Overman

5-91-9

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

A

Species: Roddish Egret ; *Egretta rufescens*
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 27 May 1991 Time Bird Seen: ~ 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Locality: Adobe Creek Res. ("Blue Lake")
Las Animas, Colo.
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binocs; Kowa 20-60X Scope.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Other did.

Number of birds seen: One Sex: - Plumage: breeding, dark phase

Light conditions: Excellent, sunny.

Distance from bird, and how measured: 150-500 yds (estimated)

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Long-legged wader stalking and catching minnows in shallow lake edge. Observed "canopy feeding" many times. Stagger forward, spreads wings mostly open, curving outward, then lunges and jabs down. Stagger back and forth.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Lake edge, plains reservoir.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Dick Shottler, Warren Finch, Peter Gent, Duane Nelson, Karl Overman.

APPENDIX 1I Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field. Estimated to be 30" in length, Long-necked and long-legged.

- It had a lanky look and size of a largish heron. Neck moderately stout. Bill long, thick and powerful-looking with distal half black, fairly sharply demarked from pink basal half of bill. Bare facial skin pale. Iris pale yellow. Legs very dark, appear blackish, except grayer upper half of tibia. Feet black. Tarsus dark with yellow part of leg above "knee" as long as part below "knee". Body even slate gray w/ bluish tones. Head and entire neck reddish-brown. Long spiky feathers of lower neck are reddish, laying over upper breast. Red neck meets gray of back.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: In flight bird appeared large, flying low, with necked kinked; with slow powerful wingbeats. Great Blue larger, with white on head. Little Blue Heron smaller, with purplish head and grey lower neck, lack 2-toned pink & black bill, has lighter legs. Louisiana Heron is white below.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've seen Reddish Egret several times, including in Everglades & S. Florida in Feb 1991.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after ☒ observation; from memory ☒.

Name (print) : MARK JANOS

Mailing address: 10 SEDUM CT. PUEBLO, CO 81001

Signature: Mark Janos

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

A

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: REDDISH EGRET (Vernacular Name) | EGRETTA RUFESCENS (Scientific Name)Date(s): MAY 27, 1991Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: UNKNOWN Plumage: NEAR BREEDINGLocality: BLUE LAKE Elevation: 4200' ?Nearest town: LAS ANIMAS County: CROWLEYTime(s) observed: 11 AM - 12 NOONDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 40-45 MINUTES

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

DWANE NELSON, MARK JAWOS, DICK SCHUTTLER, WARREN FINCH

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

BRIGHT SUNLIGHT, DIRECTLY ON BIRD WHICH WAS OUT IN THE OPENOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 10X BINOCULARS 20X-45X TELESCOPEDistance, and how measured: 75 yds CLOSEST, ESTIMATED

If photographed, type of equipment and film:

Who else photographed the bird?

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

FEEDING AT LAKE EDGE. OFTEN FEEDING WITH WINGS SPREAD IN CANOPY WHEN CATCHING FISH - OTHERWISE WALKED SEDATELY ALONG. FLEW TWICE WITH HEAVY, LABORED FLIGHTMORE REMINISCENT OF GREAT BLUE HERON, RATHER THAN LITTLE BLUE HERON.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

BIRD WAS QUITE A LARGE HERON - CONSIDERABLY LARGER THAN SNOWY EGRET OR LITTLE BLUE HERON TO MY EYE, ALTHOUGH WE HAD NOTHING TO MAKE A GOOD SIZE COMPARISON.
THE BILL WAS TWO TONE - PINK AT THE BASE, DARK AT THE TIP WITH A SHARP LINE SEPARATING THE TWO COLORS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BILL. THE BILL WAS QUITE LARGE.

Description (continued):

THE HEAD, ALL THE NECK AND THE UPPER BREAST WERE A REDDISH BROWN, THE REST OF THE BIRD, INCLUDING THE LEGS, WAS DARK BLUE. THE BIRD HAD A FEW PLUMES SHOWING BEYOND THE TAIL (THE BACK AND PLUMES APPEARED TO BE DARK BLUE, NOT LIGHT BLUE). THE BILL (1/2 PINK 1/2 BLACK NOT 2/3 PINK 1/3 BLACK), THE HEAD AND NECK BEING SHAGGY BUT NOT TOO SHAGGY AND ONLY A FEW PLUMES GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION OF A BIRD NOT QUITE IN FULL BREEDING PLUMAGE. THERE WAS A BLuish SHIELD AROUND A LIGHT EYE.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

NONE GIVEN

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

EDGE OF BLUE LAKE ON SANDY SHORE AND SHORE WITH GRASSES.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

LITTLE BLUE HERON - LARGER WITH MUCH MORE LABORED FLIGHT,
LARGE, TWO TONE BILL WITH SHARP DEMARCATION BETWEEN COLORS,
REDDISH ALL WAY DOWN TO FORM A V ON UPPER BREAST, CANOPY FEEDING.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

I AM PRETTY FAMILIAR WITH BOTH THESE SPECIES IN USA, TEXAS COAST.

HAVE SEEN MANY LITTLE BLUE HERONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AND HAVE

NEVER SEEN ONE CANOPY FEED.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE

b) after observation:

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation X from memory.

Date and time report was written: MAY 27th, 1991 9pm

Reporting observer: PETER R. GENT Signature: Peter R. Gent

Address: 55 S 35th ST, BOULDER, CO 80303.

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205

A

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Reddish Egret | Egretta rufescens
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date: May 28, 1991Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Unknown Sub-adult with no plu
Plumage:Locality: Blue Lake (formerly Adobe Creek Reservoir) Elevation: 4120'Nearest town: Las Animas to south; Hartsell to the north County: Bent-Kiowa line
probably Bent CoTime observed: 6:15 - 6:30 AMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 12 minutes ±Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
NoneOther observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)
Bird found by (Care Overman - spelling uncertain) from Detroit, Michigan on May 27
Later observed on May 27 by Mark Janos, Duane Nelson, Dick Scholteer, Warren Finch, Peter Gen
Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
AM light from east not very strong. I was looking southOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 20X telescopeDistance, and how measured: 400 → 150 feetIf photographed, type of equipment and film: Not by meWho else photographed the bird? probably Duane Nelson

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Feeding relatively slowly and methodically along the north shore of a
cove in the NE part of Blue Lake.Observers on May 27 saw a lot of canopy feeding. The bird did
not do that early in the morning on May 28th.Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern.
Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used
to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and il-
lustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:This was a fairly large heron with a long neck, but considerably smaller
than the 4 Great Blue Herons sitting on the south shore of the cove.The bird had long legs and a large bill. When I first saw
the bird, my knee-jerk reaction was a Little Blue Heron even
though I was told that was the preliminary identification yesterday.

(over)

Description (continued): The first thing I studied was the bill. It had a prominent dark tip $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ " long on both upper & lower mandibles. The remainder of the bill was pale flesh-colored (not pink as shown in National Geographic and not nearly as bright pinkish-orange as shown in the Golden Guide). The basal part of the bill appeared to me to be thicker and heavier than a Little Blue Heron's bill. (I was studying my books as I looked at the bird) The warm brown neck was a little shaggy on the lower chest; but this bird was definitely not in high-breeding plumage. The color of the neck definitely did not fit the reddish-purple color of a Little Blue Heron, and the ~~rest~~ brown neck color extended down the total length of the neck (not just in the upper neck as shown in the Nat'l Geographic Little Blue Heron illustration). Finally as the bird got closer, it was obvious that the body color (back, wings, and breast) ~~was~~ was gray with a slight brownish cast (not sea blue as seen on Little Blue Herons). The leg color was difficult with the weak sun. I thought the upper legs were light gray and lower legs dark blue (but I couldn't rule out dark green). Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

No sounds

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: Blue Lake is low this spring (like ~~most~~ most Colorado lakes). So there is a huge area of totally open shoreline. This bird was moving around in 3-6" of water along the shore and away from the summer tourists with their loud motor boats. How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? Little Blue Heron has a blue body. This bird had a gray body. " " has a reddish-purple neck. This bird had a brown neck. " " has a small black tip on its bill with a gray base. This bird has a large black tip and a pale flesh-colored base. The bird ~~it~~ was definitely larger and heavier than a Little Blue Heron. Great Blue + Tricolored Herons have yellow legs and some white on the neck and head. This bird had (blue?) legs and no white on the neck or head. What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

I have seen all the herons, but I had never seen a sub-adult Reddish Egret that did not have a shaggy head and neck.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: } National Geographic and Golden Guide
Birds of North America
b) after observation: }

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation _____ from memory _____
Date and time report was written: Noon May 29 1991

Reporting observer: L.W. Van Bridges Signature: L.W. Van Bridges

Address: 1925 S. Vaughn Way # 207 Aurora Colorado 80014

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205