

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD X UNUSUAL RECORD     

rec'd 2/1/02

**Species:** Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)**Date:** 20 July 2001**Number seen:** 1**Sex:** male**Plumage:** alternate (molting to basic)**Locality:** Jet Lake**Elevation:** ~3900 feet**Nearest town:** Eads**County:** Kiowa**Time observed:** 0650-0735**Duration of observation:** 45 minutes**Description:**

A very distinctive species, with a body length that is overall longer than, but which stands shorter than a Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*), which many were in close proximity. The short legs were orange-colored with an obvious knob at the "ankle" joints. The body was bicolored with upperparts (folded wings, tail, mantle, rump, hind neck, crown, and sides of head just below the eyes) being black and the remaining body feathering being white (see drawing). The crown was very flat, giving the head a blocky look. Wings extending well beyond the tail tip. The bill was extremely long (~1.5X greater than length of head - overall length of bill is gender diagnostic, in this case male) with the lower mandible being longer than the upper mandible and mostly straight. The upper mandible was about 3/4 the length of the lower mandible and slightly downward turned at the tip. There was a small gap between the mandibles when bill was closed. Both were red at the base extending for approximately 1/3 (upper) to 1/4 (lower) the length of each mandible, but ending at the same distance from the base. The rest of the bill was black. Eyes were small and black, almost indiscernible. The nape had some white feathering suggesting that the bird was molting into basic plumage. The skimmer partially opened its right wing briefly showing white tips to at least the secondary feathers.

**Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):** Heard call several times, each time a single "yip" reminiscent of a far-off chipmunk.

**What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species?** I have seen hundreds of this species along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coast of Georgia and Florida. Not even Picasso could make a Black Skimmer look like anything other than a Black Skimmer.

**Light conditions:** early morning soft light with the sun low on the horizon to our and the bird's right.

**Optical equipment used:** Kowa scope 20-60X

**Distance, and how estimated:** ~75 meters

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Chris Wood

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** Duane Nelson (initial observer), m.ob.

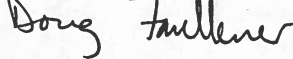
**If photographed, type of equipment and film:** digital video by Mr. Wood

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

**a) at time of observation:** none

**b) after observation:** none

**Reporting observer:** Doug Faulkner

**Signature:** 

**Address:** Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

**Date report was written:** 27 January 2002 from notes and drawing made during time of the sighting

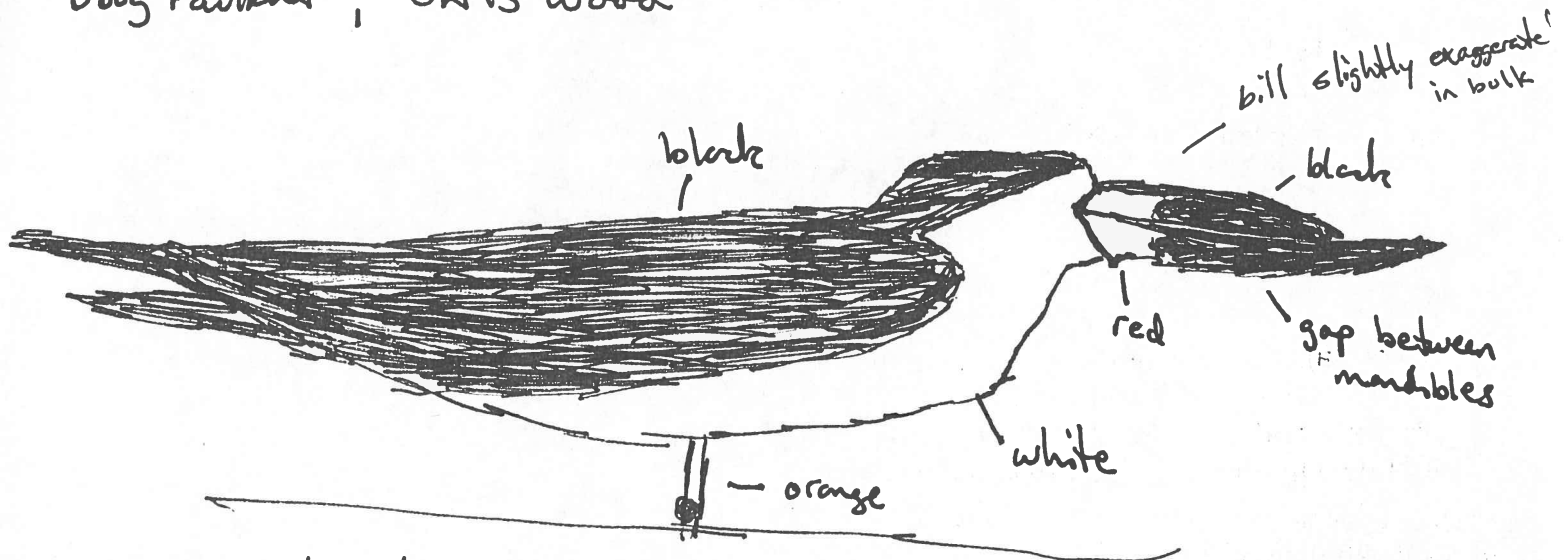
# BLACK SKIMMER

Jeff Laake 07-20-2001

0650-0735

KIOWA COUNTY, CO.

Doug Faulkner, Chris Wood



white tips to secondaries

stood shorter than FRGW, but body length longer

rape dark <sup>turning</sup> white ~~dark~~

single noted call - "yip" reminiscent of a far off chipmunk

2001-64

11-31 JUL 01

CFO-RC FILE # 2001-64

RESULTS:

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY)

SPECIES: BLACK SKIMMER RYNCHOPS NIGER  
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION: JULY 21, 2001

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: UNKNOWN PLUMAGE: BREEDING

EXACT LOCATION: JETT RESERVOIR

COUNTY: KIOWA NEAREST TOWN: EAOS ELEVATION: 4200'

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 40 mins TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 2:35 - 3:15 pm

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW THE BIRD(S) WITH YOU:

DuANE NELSON

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S):

CHRIS WOOD, MARK JANOS, RIC OLSON

LIGHT CONDITIONS (QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION):

BRIGHT SUNSHINE FROM BEHIND

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED:

20-60X TELESCOPE

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): 80-100 YARDS

WAS BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? YES IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS?           

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? CHRIS WOOD

DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED:

STANDING IN VERY SHALLOW WATER AND ON MUD  
ON SHORELINE OF A TYPICAL PLAINS RESERVOIR

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION):

SEEN BRIEFLY FLYING, OTHERWISE STANDING OFTEN  
WITH BILL OPEN (PRESUMABLY TRYING TO COOL DOWN).

DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. INCLUDE THE OVERALL SIZE AND SHAPE AND HOW YOU PLACED THE BIRD IN THE GENERAL GROUP THAT YOU DID. GIVE COMPLETE DETAILS OF PLUMAGE, INCLUDING HEAD, THROAT, UNDERSIDES, NAPE, BACK, WINGS AND TAIL. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MARKS YOU USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD(S). DESCRIBE OTHER DETAILS, SUCH AS COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYE, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT IN MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION. (FILL OUT THIS PORTION EVEN IF PHOTOGRAPHS ARE SUBMITTED; YOU MAY ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS, DRAWINGS, FIELD SKETCHES OR COPY OF FIELD NOTES):

THE BIRD WAS CONSIDERABLY LARGER THAN A NEARBY FRANKLIN'S GULL. AT REST, THE BODY, WINGS AND TAIL LOOKED ALL BLACK. IT WAS ALSO BLACK ON THE NECK NAPE AND OVER ONTO THE CROWN. THE FRONT, SIDES OF THE NECK AND LOWER SIDES OF FACE WERE WHITE, WHICH MET OVER THE BILL. THE UPPER MANDIBLE WAS MUCH SHORTER THAN THE LOWER MANDIBLE, ALTHOUGH BOTH WERE RED AT THE BASE, AND BLACK AT THE TIP. THE LEGS WERE A DEEP RED. IN FLIGHT, THERE WAS WHITE UNDER THE WINGS, EXCEPT FOR THE PRIMARY TIPS, AND DESCRIBE BIRD'S CALL OR SONG: WHITE IN THE OUTER TAIL. THE EYE WAS DARK.

NONE HEARD

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM:

THERE REALLY IS NO OTHER BIRD WITH A BILL ANYTHING LIKE THIS, WITH THE MANDIBLES OF SUCH DIFFERENT LENGTHS. THE BODY COLOR SEPARATES IT FROM MOST TERNS, ALONG WITH BLACK TERNS WERE PRESENT, BUT THEY AREN'T LIKE SKIMMERS AT ALL. WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES?

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION): NONE USED FOR IDENTIFICATION

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING \_\_\_\_\_ OR AFTER X OBSERVATION, OR LATER FROM MEMORY \_\_\_\_\_.

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT: JULY 23, 2001

REPORTING OBSERVER: PETER R. GENT

SIGNATURE: Peter R. Gent

OBSERVER ADDRESS:

55 S 35th St,  
BOULDER,  
CO 80305.

SEND REPORT TO:

COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

c/o BILL LISOWSKY

2919 SILVERPLUME DR.

FT. COLLINS, CO 80526

**Subj: Black Skimmer**  
**Date: 9/16/2001 8:45:55 PM Pacific Daylight Time**  
**From: nmo@worldnet.att.net (Nancy Olson)**  
**To: GreatGrayO@aol.com (Tony Leukering)**

2001-64

Tony

I'll mail the video to you.

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form (This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.) Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name) Black Skimmer (Scientific Name) Rynchops niger

Date(s) of occurrence: July 20 2001

Number of birds seen: one Sex: probable male Plumage: alternate, beginning to molt to basic

Exact location: Southeast bay of Jett Lake

County: Kiowa Nearest town: Eads Elevation: 3920 feet

Length of observation: 1 hour and 15 minutes Time(s) of observation: ~05:45 to 07:00

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: none

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Duane Nelson, Chris Woods, Doug Faulkner, mob

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: sunrise, with partial cloud cover. Sun behind and to the right of the bird.

Optical equipment used: Ziess 10 x 40, Kowa TSN4 20 x 60

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): 200 yards

Was bird(s) photographed? Yes, video ( please note that times on the video are Mtn Standard Time) If so, have you submitted photos? yes

Who took the photographs? Ric Olson video

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:

Fresh water shoreline

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): The bird was observed resting on the shoreline with a flock of Franklins Gulls. Also heard giving its call note.

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report.

Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes): This bird was similar in size to the near by Franklins Gulls. The bird was basically black on top and white below. With the forehead, 'cheeks', 1/2 the neck., throat, breast and belly were white. The crown, nape, back and wings were black. The separation between colors was very crisp through out. The legs appeared short and colored orangish or reddish. The massive bill was two toned with the basal 1/3 orange and the rest black. The mandible was much longer than the upper bill ( male?). Not noted in the field but seen faintly in the video is that the nape appears to be molting to a white ( basic)

Describe bird's call or song: Call/ Single 'kip'

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: unmistakable?

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

Seen quite a few in Florida

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): Sibley Guide to Birds/ 2000

This report is from notes made during Video or after observation or later from memory

Date of written report: 9/16/01

Reporting observer: Signature: Ric Olson

Reporting Observer's Address: 9450 N Heather Dr. Castle Rock, Co., 80104

City: State: Zip:

Send report to: Colorado Birds Record Committee c/o Bill Lisowsky 2919 Silverplume Dr. Ft. Collins, Co. 80526

---

Headers

Return-Path: <nmo@worldnet.att.net>

Received: from rly-xb03.mx.aol.com (rly-xb03.mail.aol.com [172.20.105.104]) by air-xb01.mail.aol.com (v80.17) with ESMTP id MAILINXB14-0916234555; Sun, 16 Sep 2001 23:45:55 2000

Received: from mtiwmhc21.worldnet.att.net (mtiwmhc21.worldnet.att.net [204.127.131.46]) by rly-xb03.mx.aol.com (v80.21) with ESMTP id MAILRELAYINXB32-0916234539; Sun, 16 Sep 2001 23:45:39 -0400

Received: from default ([12.86.11.188]) by mtiwmhc21.worldnet.att.net (InterMail vM.4.01.03.16 201-229-121-116-20010115) with SMTP id <20010917034537.PPNI1680.mtiwmhc21.worldnet.att.net@default> for <GreatGrayO@aol.com>; Mon, 17 Sep 2001 03:45:37 +0000

Message-ID: <001701c13f2d\$7f683ae0\$bc0b560c@default>

From: "Nancy Olson" <nmo@worldnet.att.net>

To: "Tony Leukering" <GreatGrayO@aol.com>

Subject: Black Skimmer

Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 21:22:55 -0600

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain;  
charset="iso-8859-1"

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

X-Priority: 3

X-MSMail-Priority: Normal

X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 5.00.3018.1300

X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V5.00.3018.1300



2001-64



Black Skimmer - 1st Colorado Record



Jett Reservoir  
Kiowa Co.  
20 July 2001



Photos: christopherlwood

zeledonia@att.net