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COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

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

Species: Common Gallinule | Gallinula chloropus
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): April 30, 1981Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: AdultLocality: Ryan Gulch Lake R69W T5N S27 Elevation: ~4900'Nearest town: Loveland, CO County: LarimerTime(s) observed: 11:30 → 11:40 AMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 10 minutes

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

None that I am aware of.

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

None that I am aware of.Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
Sun was basically overhead. I was north of the bird looking south.
Light was very good.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 7x35 Mirakel binocularsDistance, and how measured: 20 meters, ocular estimateIf photographed, type of equipment and film: Bird would have been identifiable with 200mm. photo (regretably my camera was not with me)Who else photographed the bird? Nobody that I am aware of

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

Bird was walking on matted down cattails ~5-7 meters from water's edge when first seen. It move down to some sparse, upright cattails and fed in full view for few minutes. Then without apparent cause it clucked loudly and moved into an area of very dense cattails by swimming. I did not see the bird again.

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:

Overall appearance & size were Cootlike. Coots were seen on open water nearby. Bill and forehead were bright red. Tip of bill appeared to be light yellow. Body and head were dark gray to black. White stripe ran length of body below wing. Some white in tail. Legs greenish. I did not see toes well enough to describe.

Description (continued):

This bird's primary "companions" in the cattail area were yellow-headed blackbirds. Coots, pied-billed grebes and a horned grebe were observed in open waters nearby. This is my first sighting of a common gallinule in Colorado since moving here in 1974. I work for Colorado State Forest Service. Have been a serious birder since 1967. There is no doubt in my mind bird I saw was Common gallinule.

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

A few one-syllable chickenlike sounds were heard while bird was feeding in sparse cattails. A louder cluck was uttered as bird rapidly entered dense cattails (partly running, mostly swimming).

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

Area of cattails at the mouth of small feeder stream where it fed or entered large reservoir or lake

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Coot & Sora Rail are similar. Red bill and forehead were the most obvious field marks eliminating these two. Undersides were dark with no striping, unlike Sora. White stripe on side unlike Coot or Sora.

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

While living in Ohio and North Carolina (1967-1974) I saw several (10-15?) common gallinules. I have observed 100's of coots over the years. My best observations of Soras have been in 1979 & 1980 at Fossil Creek Reservoir near Ft. Collins.

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

a) at time of observation: After bird had disappeared I confirmed id in Robbins & Slinger. I was supported, not swayed, by field guide(s).

b) after observation: I consulted both Eastern (new edition) and Western Peterson Field Guides. Kevin Cook of Ft. Collins suggested I report sighting. Common Gallinule is not listed on FC area checklist.

This report was written from reports made during 5 hrs., after observation ☒ from memory

Date and time report was written: May 5, 1981

Reporting observer: David Allen Leatherman Signature: David Allen Leatherman

Address: 2602 Countryside Ct., Fort Collins, CO 80524

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

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