

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS--SIGHT RECORD FORM

Species: COMMON MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) One (1) adu

Date: 27 April 1987

Location: Near golf course at Craig, Moffat County, Colorado

Time: 2:45 to 3:00 p.m.; observation time: 5 minutes.

Light conditions: Excellent--bright sun at my left shoulder and

Weather: Clear, warm (75° F.), wind calm to light.

Optical equipment: 8 X 40 Swift binoculars.

Distance from bird: 25 to 40 feet, estimated.

Habitat: The wetlands along the Yampa River in this area consist of small ponds, extensive reed and/or cattail marshes interspersed with grass or sedge-covered hummocks and, at this time of year, wet alkaline flats. The Moorhen was in a reed marsh (no cattails) with areas of open water measuring 8 to 12 inches deep, approximately 1/4 mi. from the river.

General Description:

Size and shape: There were two American Coot (*Fulica americana*) in the marsh, identified by their black head, neck and body, and their white bill and frontal shield. The Moorhen was close to the same size and shape of the Am. Coots, though it was not seen in close proximity to them. It seemed, however, to be longer bodied and the bill appeared to be narrower.

Plumage: Black head, neck, breast, rump and underparts; white stripe along sides of body; back olive brown; center of tail black, outer tail feathers white.

Soft parts: Red frontal shield; bill red with yellow tip. Eye was dark. Legs yellow-green, long lobed toes (feet seemed oversized).

Could see no metal or plastic leg bands or other identifying markers.

Voice: None heard; Coots silent also.

Behavior: First seen lurking through the dead remains of 2-4 ft. reeds (no new growth at this date); swam into open water, detected my presence, quickly swam and walked to edge of open water, stepped out onto a grassy hummock, fanned and wagged its tail, walked over hummock and disappeared into another section of the marsh. Seen a few minutes later wading and paddling in and out of dead reeds, picking here and there with its bill. Field notes describe it as "bobbing along."

Experience with this species: Saw several on trips to East Florida.

Report compiled from field notes taken at time of viewing. National Geographic and Audubon's Master Guide before writing mostly to check on range of the Moorhen.

Unfortunately and typically, I did not have access to a camera at the time of viewing. Also, I was the only observer (as far as I know) this date.

Judy Ward 1-20-87

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