

2002-105

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CBRC FILE #:

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) Arctic Loon		(Scientific Name) Gavia arctica
Date(s) of occurrence: 19 November 2002		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Unknown	Plumage: Adult molting from alternate To basic
Exact location: On Walker Pond. From Franktown, 0.75 miles west on CO 88, then 0.75 miles north on Walker Road		
County: Douglas	Nearest town: Franktown	Elevation: approx. 6,100 feet
Length of observation: Three hours		Time(s) of observation: approx. 11:30 a.m to 2:30 p.m.
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Duane Nelson, Brandon Percival, Ira Sanders, Peter Gent, Hugh & Urling Kingery, and several others.		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Glenn Walbeck and, to the best of my knowledge, every single member to the CBRC. Many others as well, whose names I do not have.		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: Excellent conditions. Very little wind or heat waves. Sun was out and behind my back as I was looking north at the bird with the sun at my back.		
Optical equipment used: Scope: Swarovski AT 80 HD with 20-60x eyepiece. Binos: Swarovski 8.5 x 42 EL. Camera: Nikon Coolpix 995		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): approx. 125-250 feet		
Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? Yes.		If so, are you submitting photos? Yes
Who took the photograph(s)? All photos © 2002 David J. Waltman		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: Medium-sized pond surrounded by flat grasslands and/or agricultural land		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: Actively swimming, diving, and preening. Seen catching fish on occasion.		
DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. See extensive notes and references on photo pages.		
Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: None.		
SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration: See extensive notes on photo pages.		
What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? No previous Arctic's, but many Pacific's and all the other loon species in Alaska and the Lower 48.		
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): My primary reference (a copy of which is attached) was the fine article by Andrew Birch and Cin-Ty-Lee, pp. 106-115, <i>Birding</i> . Volume XXIX, Number 2, April 1997, published by the American Birding Association (hereinafter referred to as "Birch and C.-T. Lee"). Other references included all the common field guides and COBIRDS postings, particularly the detailed observations and photo notations by Tony Leukering.		
This report was made from (check one) ___ notes made during observation _x_ notes made after observation ___ later from memory And extensive study of roughly 200 of my photographs.		
Date and time of written report: April 25, 2003, noon.		
Reporting observer: David J. Waltman		Signature: David J. Waltman
Reporting observer's address: 8464 West Fork Road		
City: Boulder	State: CO	Zip: 80302

Send report to:
Colorado Bird Records Committee
Tony Leukering
PO Box 660
Brighton, CO 80601



This photo shows a number of characteristics to narrow the species to *Gavia arctica*, and even the probability of *viridigularis*:

FLANKS. Most importantly, note the white flanks flared up to the sides of the rump. Birch and C.-T. Lee, p. 110 & 111: "The best field mark in all plumages is the color pattern of the rear portion of the flank. Pacific Loons have entirely dark flanks (Figures 4 and 5); they lack Arctic Loon's conspicuous white rear flank patch. In the field, the flank patches on Arctic Loons appear as conspicuous posterior white patches that 'flare' to a greater extent above the waterline than in Pacific Loons (Figure 1-3...)... Pacific Loons can show obvious white above the waterline if they are swimming 'high' or partly rolling over as if to preen, but they never show the shape and extent of white that Arctic Loons display (Dunn and Rose 1992). The key is to note whether the white on the flanks extends up to the sides of the rump, indicating Arctic Loon.

BILL. Note the length and heft of the bill. I have never seen bill on a Pacific or photo of a Pacific Loon that is this large. Pacifics having a relatively dainty bill. Birch and C.-T. Lee, p. 109: "In the field, Arctic Loons show a larger and thicker bill than Pacific Loons (Figures 1,2,4, and 5). Measurements of specimens... on Arctic Loons, the culmen averages longer...25 percent, and the bill base is consistently proportionately thicker than in Pacific Loons." The subspecies *viridigularis* is most likely in this location, and the large bill would be consistent with that. Birch and C.-T. Lee, p. 108: "The subspecies *viridigularis* averages larger and longer-billed than the nominate subspecies...."

NECK STRIPES. The appearance and location of the neck stripes narrow the loon species possibilities to Arctic and Pacific. Their visibility indicates, as do other coloration, that the bird is an adult that has not completed its molt to basic. I am unable to conclude from looking at these neck stripes whether they are any more characteristic of Arctic or Pacific.



Yet another example of the white flanks, neck stripes, but also the uptilted head and bill, and the very long neck (see note on next photo).