

SPECIES:

rec'd 9-17-96
Accepted 7-0

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

DATE:

August 21, 1996

~~date of obs. 8-21 - 8-23 1996
Two days (slightly) by Leavening (days), NO
submitted after circulation~~

TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION:

11:05 to 12:05 MDT - The bird was seen on and off between these times (we broke-off our observations twice to drive to a closer location for a better view).

LOCATION:

Prewitt Reservoir (seen from North and Northwest side of reservoir)

COUNTY:

Northeast Washington County

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

Chris Wood, 3465 Otis Court, Lakewood, Colorado 80227
Tim Mitzen, 11113 Eudora Circle, Thornton, Colorado 80233

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT I USED:

Zeiss 10X40 binoculars
Bausch & Lomb Elite 77mm spotting scope (ED glass) and 20-60x zoom eyepiece

WEATHER CONDITIONS:

SKY: Mostly cloudy, periods of bright sun light (between clouds)
WIND: Northeast 5-15 mph
TEMP: 78F

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION:

Changed throughout the observation period, sometimes backlit. During the best and closest observation the sun was behind and to the right of the bird and shining upon the bird.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED:

Varied; 300-500 yards while it was seen flying, diving, and swimming and approximately 50 yards distant when it was preening on a mudflat. Distances are my estimates.

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN:

1 (one)

SEX:

Unknown.

PLUMAGE:

Immature.

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR:

The bird was first seen flying over the reservoir. The bird would drop in altitude to approximately two feet above the surface of the water and then fly and glide, occasionally diving into the water from this height whereby the bird actually caught a fish on several occasions. The bird repeated this feeding activity perhaps 20-25 times. Each time before the bird would take flight it would hold its wings slightly up (off its back) as if to dry them. The bird would hold its wings in this position for 5-10 seconds and then flap and takeoff.

When the bird was finished feeding it flew to the West end of the reservoir and landed on the water near where several American White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) were sitting on a mudflat. The bird proceeded to swim over to the mudflat, exited the water and stood next to several of the American White Pelicans. No interactions between these two species were noted. The bird preened for the remainder of my observation.

SIZE:

Approximately half the size of an American White Pelican.

HEAD & NECK:

Top of head and back of neck were dark brown.

EYES & LORES:

Iris dark brown.

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES:

Long bluish-gray bill with a pouch on the lower mandible.

LEGS & FEET:

Legs and feet black.

UPPERPARTS:

Dark brown back, neck and scapulars.

UNDERPARTS:

Dirty white belly.

RETRICES:

Dark brown

WINGS:**UPPERWINGS:**

Dark brown; same color as back, primaries slightly darker.

UNDERWINGS:

Dark brown; A white stripe was visible under the wings where the primaries and secondaries meet the underwing coverts. I could not tell if the white was on the base of the flight feathers or the tips of the coverts.

VOCALIZATION:

No vocalizations were heard.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

American White Pelican - Large white pelican. Immature is also large and dirty white. Wings white with black primaries and outer secondaries. Large orange bill. The bird seen at Prewitt was clearly half the size of an American White Pelican. There are no other similar appearing species!

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

Brown Pelican - Have seen several around San Francisco Bay (October - November 1988) in both adult and immature plumage. Have seen brown pelicans at Chatfield Reservoir (Jefferson County, Colorado) one on June 24, 1991 and two on June 26, 1996.

American White Pelican - Have seen tens of thousands in Eastern Colorado over the last twelve years.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

National Geographic Society "Field Guide to the Birds of North America" Second Edition was consulted for scientific names used in this report.

COMMENTS:

Several photographs were taken of the bird by both Chris Wood and myself of the bird in flight and while the bird was preening. The camera I used as a Nikon FG with a 50mm f1.8 lens. I set my scope on 20X and focused it upon the bird and set the camera focus to infinity, I then "butted" the camera lens up to the scope eyepiece.

NAME:

Joey M. Kellner
8612 West Hinsdale Place
Littleton, Colorado 80123

SIGNATURE:

DATE: August 22, 1996

ADDENDUM:

August 31, 1996

The bird was still present on August 31 and was seen by the people below as part of a Denver Field Ornithologists field trip to Northeast Colorado.

Joey Kellner
Glenn Hageman
Jeane Hageman
Randy Lentz
Warren Finch

Each of these people saw this bird as it rested (bill down) while sitting on a mudflat (same mudflat as described earlier).

No new behaviors nor new field marks were noted by this observer.