

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 1997-9
SLIDES Accepted 7-0
PHOTOS
rec'd 1-11-98

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Date: 23 September 1996 ^{OK ✓} **Number seen:** one **Sex:** unknown **Plumage:** immature

Locality: Barr Lake **Elevation:** 5000'

Nearest town: Brighton **County:** Adams

Time observed: off and on between about 9:05 - 9:15 AM MDT

Duration of observation: about 5 minutes

Description: While operating the banding station at Barr Lake S.P., I took the opportunity to look out over the lake from net site #18. There was a spit way out on the lake on which some cormorants and pelicans were standing. I glassed the birds and noticed a bird that looked vaguely Brown Pelican-like, but I thought it must be simply a cormorant in some odd posture that, at such a long distance, looked like a Brown Pelican. But, I watched it to be sure and when the bird moved I realized that, indeed, the bird was a Brown Pelican.

I and two friends went back to the banding station, I grabbed my camera, and we all proceeded out toward the bird. We had closed the distance considerably when we stopped to view the bird again from another spit. We all looked at it and then I advanced further to attempt to photograph the bird. It was very skittish and flew off after I'd gone another 50 feet and when I was still a long way away (>200 meters). I took a couple pictures of the bird in flight, though the distance precluded getting much in the way of acceptable photos (as you can see from the enclosed slides; in both images, the Brown Pelican is in the left side of the slide, with all pelicans facing right; the Barr Lake Bald Eagle nest can be seen in the background). The bird apparently left the lake, as, despite a fairly thorough search for it later in the morning, we could not find it.

The bird was obviously smaller than nearby Am. White Pelicans, more nearly the size of nearby Double-crested Cormorants. It had a brown head, neck, and back, a very large, gray bill, dark legs, and a white belly. It held the bill pointing downward and resting on its chest. The bill extended at least 2/3 of the bird's standing height.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 10s of 1000s of both pelican species and of Double-crested Cormorants. I cannot imagine confusing the species with any regularly-occurring CO species or, for that matter, much of anything else.

Light conditions: sun mostly behind us

Optical equipment used: 7x42 Zeiss

Distance, and how estimated: estimated distance of greater than 200 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Fred Baumgarten and Nelda Gamble

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none at Barr Lake, of which I'm aware

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I photographed it with Nikon 8008S with a 75-205 mm lens (at longest setting) on Sensia 100. I have enclosed copies of one transparency.

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

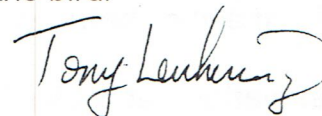
a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

This report written from memory and from perusal of my slides of the bird.

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 20 June 1997

Note: I suspect that this individual was the bird that had been at Jackson Reservoir for some time, but which left there and was not seen there following its arrival in the Denver area. The timing is correct for this bird to also have been the one that showed up at Chatfield Reservoir on the same date as this record, but after it was last seen at Barr Lake.

