

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

2001-193

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name): RED-NECKED GREBE		(Scientific Name) Podiceps grisegena
Date(s) of occurrence: December 10 – 23, 2001		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Unknown	Plumage: 1st Basic
Exact Location: Standley Lake		
County: Jefferson	Nearest town: Arvada/Westminster	Elevation: XXX msl
Length of observation: Depended upon date of observation. On any given observation, maximum length of observation was approximately 5 minutes		Time(s) of observation: Depended upon date of observation. Most observations were in the morning between 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM MST. A few observations took place in late afternoon as well.
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: A few observers were present with me during the bird's approximately 15 day stay. I believe Tony Leukering was present with me during one of the observations.		
Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Many, I believe. Norm Erthal first found the bird.		
Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Varied depending upon date of observation. Most observations were in the morning and I was situated on the eastern shore of the lake, looking west, thus most observations were with the sun to my back. Cloud conditions varied between sunny and overcast.		
Optical equipment used: 20X60 Leiss Televid Spotting Scope		
Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): Varied depending upon date. The bird never was closely observed. Closest distance was approximately 500 yards.		
Was bird(s) photographed? Yes (video)	If so, have you submitted photos? Yes (one poor quality still from video)	
Who took the photographs? Myself		
Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Open water reservoir		
Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): Only observed swimming and diving.		
Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):		
<p>A Red-necked Grebe was reported from Standley Lake a day or two prior to my first observing the bird. As I was involved with conducting daily waterbird surveys of Standley Lake that fall, I was surprised to hear of a Red-necked Grebe being found by Norm Erthal on the lake, despite my vigilant efforts to count all birds on the water, even on the day the bird was observed by Norm Erthal. Careful search of the lake the following morning after Norm's sighting allowed me to spend extra effort scanning the lake. After roughly 15 minutes of searching, I spotted the bird in the far northwestern corner of the lake at a considerable distance, roughly one-half mile. From that initial view, I was able to detect a relatively large grebe (somewhat Mallard size) with a longish, dagger-like bill, dark brown coloration, and thick-necked (compared to nearby Western and Clark's Grebes) appearance. The bird foraged often and spent a large portion of its' time underwater. That, along with the considerable distance involved with the sighting, allowed for a less than optimal observation during on that day.</p> <p>The bird ultimately spent a good portion of the month of December at Standley Lake, however, and I was able to get more discreet views of the bird. Though the bird always remained in the northwestern corner of the lake, I was able to get satisfactory views to clearly identify the bird.</p> <p>As stated above, the bird was obviously a large grebe, with a longish, straight bill, triangular head, thick-necked, and relatively hump-backed. Only a few times was I able to plainly observe the bill pattern as being a dull yellowish. The large, triangular head was similar in shape to that of other Podiceps grebes, except that the rear head profile was relatively vertical, creating the appearance of the highest point of the head on the rear crown, unlike that of Horned or Eared Grebes, in which the highest head profile typically lies more anterior. The head also appeared quite flat-crowned, which is typical of the species. Overall color patternation of the head was a dark brown throughout the crown and face, except for a lightened swath from rear of the auriculars ventrally to the chin and then anteriorly to the lower mandible. This lightish swath was an almost whitish vertical crescent from the rear crown to the chin. The</p>		

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rear neck was also dark brownish-gray and subtly blended into a lighter gray throat, side neck, and breast. Quite evident from behind the bird were obvious whitish spots present on the sides of the head separated by a darkish median neck stripe, This eye-spot characteristic is diagnostic of Red-necked Grebe. The upperparts were a dark brownish or almost black. The flanks were a dark gray.

On one occasion, I was able to capture a few minutes of video of the bird in question. I have attached a digital still from that video. Though the still is of poor quality and no discernible plumage characteristics of the Red-necked Grebe can be ascertained, the shape of the bird is diagnostic, especially when compared to the nearby Western Grebe.



Describe bird's call or song: **None heard**

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **The smaller size and more upright posture eliminated all loons. Members of the larger Aechmophorus genus were eliminated easily by the larger size, black-and-white patterning, and snake-like neck posture (unlike the straight-necked appearance of Red-necked) of that group. Smaller grebes, namely Horned and Eared, were also easily eliminated by size, shape, and plumage characteristics.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **Have observed hundreds, if not thousands of other birds in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Manitoba, North Dakota, Alaska, and the East Coast. Have also observed a few other birds in Texas and Colorado.**

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): **None**

This report is from notes made during or after **XX** observation or later from memory

Date of written report: **02/02/03**

Reporting observer: **Larry Semo**

Signature:



Reporting Observer's Address: **9054 Dover Street**

City: **Westminster**

State: **Colorado**

Zip: **80021**

Send report to:
Colorado Birds Record Committee
c/o Tony Leukering
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory