

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

A
Z-88-27

Species: Red-necked Grebe
(Vernacular name)

Podiceps grisegena
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 28 November 1988 Time Bird Seen: 0820 to 0830

Locality: Hamilton Reservoir Rawhide Power Plant, from the overlook
10(?) miles N Wellington Larimer Co, CO
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Celestron 8.5 x telescope Nikon 9x30 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: None

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: U Plumage: Winter Age uncertain, ~~adult~~

Light conditions: Very good - intermittent bright sun behind me as I looked at bird

Wind Calm
Distance from bird, and how measured: First sighting ~ 100m then gradually swam away to 200m
Visual estimate

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

just sitting on the water, slowly swimming away, occasional preening. It did not dive during my observation, but when Dave Leatherman saw it the next day it was diving frequently. During my observation it was first in the middle of a flock of Canada Geese but it gradually separated itself from them & was swimming around alone after a while.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: open water, depth unknown
but probably 20-30 feet

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Dave Leatherman saw it the next day. I was alone

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field. (Transcribed from notes written in the field) ~~at the time~~

Large grebe. Direct comparison was only possible with Canada Greese, of which it was $\sim 1/3$ to $1/2$ the size. - medium sized duck-like bird probably a little smaller than Western Grebe. Neck long but shorter + stouter than Western. Bill long, narrow, ^{straight} pointed, but shorter + stouter than that of a Western. Color appeared yellowish throughout. Head chunkier than Western, with ^{vaguely} angled shape to rear crown, suggesting crest or hump.

Plumage: Crown dark, almost forming dark cap. Side of face fairly dark from auriculars upwards. Throat pale gray as was lower face, with a large pale area curving around behind the auriculars to end high on rear crown/nape area. - obvious but not sharply defined as is pictured in some books. Thin dark gray line down centering nape, sides of neck intermediate gray with a distinct brownish/cinnamon tinge. Front of neck grayish white. Back uniform dark gray. Sides intermediate gray to the water line. Transitions from the pale gray/white throat + front of neck to the dark gray rear nape + back of neck were all gradual. (i.e. no sharp contrasts)

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--
i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: None Heard.

→ White wing patch seen briefly as the bird was preening - probably on the secondaries

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Western/Clark's grebe is larger, sharp black + white contrast, longer + thinner neck + bill. Horned grebe much smaller, bill short + dark, not long + straight + yellow. Loons larger, with shorter + stouter neck, more rounded head, no wing patch

Prior experience with this and similar species: I've seen several Red-necked Grebes in winter plumage in the past (on east coast) but it has been at least 10 years now since the last sighting. I'm very familiar with nearly all N.A. loons, grebes, ducks, etc.

This report was written from notes made during ___ after ☒ observation; from memory ☒.
Written 1/2 hour after observation, from memory, without consulting bird book

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Signature: Bill Howe

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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