

2-92-119

A

Rare bird report

Species: Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Plumage: It appeared to be an adult, part way through molt from breeding to winter plumage.

Date: 10/23, 26/1992

Location: Union Reservoir (Calkins Lake) Weld County, Latilong 4

Description of Observation: the bird was seen swimming, diving and preening for 10-15 minutes on 2 occasions. It was seen as close as 100 yards (estimated). The light was generally good sunlight, behind the observers. Principal optic used was a 40 power Kowa scope.

Description of bird: The bird was found while scanning Union Reservoir's hundreds of Western Grebes for the ducks and other grebe species that were present. The bird looked (to me) much more like a loon than the other grebes because of the shorter, thicker neck. A dull rusty wash was present on the breast and front of neck. The side of the head had a indistinctly outlined white patch extending from below the bill to the back of the auricular area. The rest of the face was a dull grey, the top of the head was black. The bill was yellow with darker smudges. The body was grey, darker on the top and lighter on the sides. When the wings were unfurled a conspicuous white patch could be seen on the leading edge, the white patch on the trailing edge was not nearly so bright and was unnoticed unless specifically looked for. The bird was definitely shorter than the Western Grebes with an obviously shorter, thicker neck. It was obviously bigger and longer-necked than the Horned Grebes which were also present.

Elimination of similar species. When compared directly with Western and Clark's Grebe the bird was shorter, had a shorter and thicker neck, had the white patch on the leading edge of the wing, had the rusty wash on the neck and breast, and had a much different head pattern. When compared directly with Horned Grebes it was larger, longer-necked, had the white patch on the leading edge of the wing, had the rusty wash. It was likewise too large for Eared or Pied-billed grebes. It was generally too small for any loon and the white patches on the top of the wings would rule those out also. Much too small for a cormorant (except Olivaceous) and the coloring on the face, neck, and wings would rule those out. Gallinules and coots are too small and have much different coloration patterns.

Bill Prother