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COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

rec'd 8/15/03

Species: Piping Plover (*Charadrius melanotos*)**Date:** 8 August 2003 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** unknown **Plumage:** juvenal**Locality:** Barr Lake SP (shoreline NW of banding station)**Elevation:** ~5,000 ft.**Nearest town:** Brighton**County:** Adams**Time observed:** about 1500 hrs**Duration of observation:** approximately 10 minutes total

Description: Bill Schmoker called the RMBO office to report a Piping Plover at Barr Lake SP. Tony Leukering and I went out there to see the bird. The overall body shape was that of a small *Charadrius* plover. The two most striking features were the overall very pale plumage and the bright orange legs. The upperparts were a light gray (my photos show it having a brownish tone, but that is wrong). The underparts were bright white. In addition, there was a white collar fully encircling the neck. The face was white from the bill to the eye and upper forehead. A thick, white supercilium extended from the white face, over the dark eye, and almost going the full length of the side of the head. The bird also had a faint incomplete breastband the same color as the upperparts. The bill was short, stout, tapered to a blunt point and dark, though I wouldn't necessarily say that it was black.

Separation from other species: Of the *Charadrius* plovers, only Piping Plover, Semipalmated Plover (*C. semipalmatus*), and Common Ringed Plover (*C. hiaticula*) have orange legs. However, both of the latter species have medium brown upperparts, dark lores, and complete breast bands.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen a few along the Gulf Coast in winter and breeding birds in southeastern Colorado.

Light conditions: sun to the left of me and the bird, high in the sky.

Optical equipment used: Kowa scope (20-60x lens)

Distance, and how estimated: closest at 10 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Bill Schmoker (initial observer), Tony Leukering

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Brian Gibbons (8 Aug), Gregg Goodrich (8 and 10 Aug), Bob Spencer (9 Aug)

I photographed, type of equipment and film: Nikon Coolpix 4500 (digital) through scope

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

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: National Geographic 3rd Ed.

Reporting observer: Doug Faulkner

Signature: 

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: 11 August 2003

2003-60

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

CBRC FILE #: 2003-60

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) Piping Plover

(Scientific Name) *Charadrius melanotos*

Date(s) of occurrence: 8 Aug 03

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: ?

Plumage: Juvenile

Exact location: Peninsula on south central side of Barr Lake, north of Banding Station along refuge boundary.

County: Adams (Notable location)

Nearest town: Brighton

Elevation: ~5100'

Length of observation: About 2 Hours

Time(s) of observation: about 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Doug Faulkner, Tony Leukering

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Many Observers

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: Good light

Optical equipment used: Kowa TSN 824 + 32X WA + Nikon Coolpix 995

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): Perhaps 25 meters at closest

Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? Yes

If so, are you submitting photos? Yes

Who took the photograph(s)? Bill Schmoker

Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: Large plains irrigation storage reservoir.

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits.: The Piping Plover was quite active, running around foraging on the beach. The bird mainly kept within about 10 meters of the water but didn't feed in the water like the numerous other shorebirds present.

DESCRIPTION – Fairly small, large-headed, short-billed, pale shorebird. Bill completely dark to base. Bill very stubby, only a bit longer than the eye is wide. Eye completely dark. Head overall white and pale gray. Cap pale gray, white supercilium. Forehead down to bill white. Chin and nape also white. Complete white collar. Pale gray partial breast band, same color as back of bird. Breast band thickens near "shoulder" but thins again before giving way to clean white breast. Belly and vent also clean white. Upper parts overall pale gray, wing feathers with pale light edging. Tail obscured by folded wings. Legs orange-yellow, fairly short for a shorebird.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: n/a

SIMILAR SPECIES – Big-eyed, stout-billed, breast-banded appearance quickly narrows bird down to the *Charadrius* plovers. Pale overall color rules out most of these. Snowy Plover also quite pale but shows darker legs at all ages, leaving Piping Plover.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?. I've seen a few PIPL at Cheyenne Bottoms. This is the first one I've seen in Colorado.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): Sibley Guide to Birds

This report was made from: Photos and notes taken after observation.

Date and time of written report: 21 Jan 03

Reporting observer: William P Schmoker

Signature: 

Reporting observer's address: 3381 Larkspur Dr. Longmont, CO 80503 email: bill@schmoker.org

Photos 8 Aug 03
Barr Lake

