

42 NO VOL 40/3 July 2006

2003-46

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

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Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CBRC FILE #: 2003-46

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) Red-necked Grebe

(Scientific Name) *Podiceps grisegena*

Date(s) of occurrence: June 1, 2003

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: Unknown

Plumage: Adult Non-breeding

Exact location: Weld CR 124, 2.5 miles east of CR 67 in private pond on north side of road, adjacent to reservoir

County: Weld

Nearest town: Briggsdale

Elevation:

Length of observation: 20 minutes

Time(s) of observation: 12:00 Noon

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Stephen Bloom

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): *Later seen and reported on Co-Birds* by Bryan Garecke

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: Excellent, overhead sunlight at noon

Optical equipment used: Leica and Bausch & Lomb binoculars; Swarovski scope on tripod with zoom

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): About 25-30 yards

Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? No

If so, are you submitting photos?

Who took the photograph(s)?

Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: Very full small pond with overflowing, flooded edges of reeds and willows; adjacent to house and road with surrounding fields and grasslands; at edge of Pawnee Grasslands

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: Swimming idly, slowly, somewhat sluggishly; no diving or feeding observed; drank water by thrusting bill into water, then tipping head back with mouth open to swallow; posture erect

DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. Overall appearance of a largish grebe; color was grayish-brown overall with little distinctive marking or strong variation of color; top of head, back and tip of tail were darker, smudgy; eyes dark and smudgy-charcoal color around; bill long and straight, somewhat heavy, as long as width of head, front to back; bill was yellowish-orange but darker above and at tip (grayish); lighter gray below chin, and on upper breast extending somewhat onto face; no white on face; bright white belly when rolled sideways and preening; slight line of white at wing's edge.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: None

SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration: Compared to nearby Eared and Western Grebes, both in breeding plumage; was larger and very different color; considered female ducks, including Mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler but bill and color and shape quite different; considered other Grebes, such as Pied-bill and Least but bill and size very different.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? Have seen Red-necked Grebe in Alaska, Washington, and New York. Have seen approx 1400 birds worldwide with over 300 in Colorado. Very experienced birders with hundreds of hours observing water birds at all seasons

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): Consulted National Geographic and All The Birds in field and were almost certain of ID; consulted Sibley later at home and found excellent match with illustration on page 26 of Adult Non-breeding Red-necked Grebe (page 26); reviewed in Holt and in Colorado Birds for season and location and found was rare but does occur in migration on Eastern Plains in spring. Believe was a late or lost migrant, perhaps weak or ill?

This report was made from (check one) notes made during observation notes made after observation later from memory.

Date and time of written report: Tuesday, June 3, 10am. Previously reported on Co-Birds early Monday am

Reporting observer: Michele Bloom

Signature: *Michele J. Bloom*

Reporting observer's address: 512 Madison Street

City: Denver

State: Colorado

Zip: 80206

Date: Mon, 02 Jun 2003 08:10:12 -0600 (MDT)
From: "Michele A. Bloom" <mbloom@du.edu> [Block Address](#)
Subject: [cobirds] Probable Red-necked Grebe
To: "COBIRDS Discussion List" <mbloom@du.edu>

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Yesterday, I was so enthusiastic about the Bittern display that I did not realize until later that we saw another very unusual bird. Steve and I identified with some certainty a non-breeding Red-necked Grebe. It was seen around Noon in the pond at the reservoir on CR 124 in the Pawnee Grasslands. We observed it through the scope for 15 minutes and consulted National Geographic and All The Birds while observing. Notes are detailed below.

Here is what we saw:

a grebe swimming idly and alone in the pond, not out in the open water of the reservoir itself. The bird had the upright posture of a grebe, with a largish, longish neck.

Overall the color was brownish-grey with little variation or distinctive markings. The top of the head, top of the back and tip of tail were darker, smudgy. Under the chin, front of the neck and upper breast were somewhat lighter but not white. There was not any white on the face, though there was some lighter grey extending onto the face.

Eyes were dark and smudgy. The bill was large, straight, yellow-orange but darker on the top and tip. The bill length was approximately the width of the head, front to back. There was a thin white line at the wing-edge sometimes visible. When the bird rolled sideways to preen, it revealed a bright white belly, not visible when it was swimming.

It drank several times, thrusting its bill into the water, then tipping its head back to swallow with the bill slightly open. The bird seemed sluggish, not concerned about us or the nearby mallards, gadwalls, or pintails. There were grebes on the open water of the reservoir, both Eared and Western, all in breeding plumage.

When we got home and reviewed the day's list and notes, we realized, after consulting Colorado Birds, that this would be a rare sighting, especially for June 1. We reviewed all of our resources, looking for a good illustration. Sibley's adult-nonbreeding on page 26 matches what we saw very well.

I hope that someone will be out that way today and perhaps confirm the sighting. I have seen this species in Alaska, Washington, and New York, but certainly not Colorado.

The exact location is CR 124, 2.5 miles east of CR 67, west of CR 77 on the northside of the road in the private pond at the reservoir.

Michele Bloom
Denver

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– Date: Tue, 03 Jun 2003 12:11:13 -0600
From: "Bryan Guarente" <guar8727@blue.unco.edu> **Block Address**
Subject: [cobirds] Red-necked grebe: Weld County
To: "COBIRDS Discussion List" <mbloom@du.edu>

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Today with the little time I had, I went to the reservoir/lake/pond complex on CR124 between CR69 and CR71 up in the Pawnee Grasslands to check for the red-necked grebe reported by Bloom earlier this week. It was still present when I showed up until I tried to snap my first ever digiscoped photo with my new digital camera. As soon as I put the camera to the scope, the bird flew south. I checked the only local ponds I could find with no luck.

However, it was definitely a red-necked grebe. It had that distinctive triangular shaped head with a surprisingly dark bill. The bird was larger than the eared grebes present as well. In flight the bird showed limited white on the speculum, and a grayish pattern on the neck. I am very confident that this bird was a nonbreeding plumage red-necked grebe. Thanks for the original find! Great Find!

Bryan Guarente
University of Northern Colorado Student
Media, PA

Sent via the UNC Bearmail system at blue.unco.edu

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