

Accepted (6-1)

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

TRUMPETER SWANCygnus buccinatorLocation: Lake Cheraw; near Cheraw; Otero County, ColoradoDate: December 30, 1995

This bird was discovered in the morning by Joey Kellner and Chris Woods on the Rocky Ford Christmas Bird Count. Brandon Percival, Jerry Poe, and John and Lisa Rawinski and I observed the bird on Lake Cheraw that same afternoon at about 1:30 p.m. We watched it through our scopes (mine is a Kowa TSN-4 20-60X) at about 200 yards distance. The light was excellent with the sun from over our backs. The bird floated on the surface of the lake, occasionally feeding by submerging its head and neck to graze on the bottom, near the shore. We never saw the bird in flight.

Description:

This was a huge bird, nearly 4 feet long, including the neck. It was a pure white adult. The neck was long, curved at the top and bottom but the center was quite straight. The neck was long but very thick. The bill was pure, shiny black. It had no trace of yellow on the bill, in the lores. The bill was massive, with a straight, not concave, culmen. The eye looked black and was connected to the black bill by a narrow, dark bridge of skin that nearly encircle the eye. I could not make out whether the bird had a pink edge to the bill at my distance.

Similar Species:

The real identification problem is with the Tundra Swan is also all white and nearly as big. The Tundra Swan is smaller, more slender-necked, curved-necked, with a proportionately smaller bill, with a down-curved upper mandible. The Trumpeter lacks the yellow bill spot of the Tundra.

Experience with Species:

I have seen both species of swans in Colorado.

This report is prepared from memory and notes made following observation.



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