

1998-1 (~~1-98-1~~)  
(re-circulation; orig. record # 1995)  
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COLORADO RARE BIRD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD \_\_\_ RARE RECORD \_\_\_ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: *Red-throated Loon*  
(Vernacular Name)

*Gavia stellata*  
(Scientific Name)

Dates: December 1, 1995.

Number of birds seen: two.

Sex: unknown.

Plumage: immature.

Locality: Chatfield Reservoir.

Elevation: 5,300.

Nearest town: Littleton.

County: Jefferson.

Time observed: 12:08-12:10 and 12:15-12:35PM.

Duration of observation: 12 minutes.

**Other observers with me:**

David Smith 808 Sirius Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906 (719)-473-1780.

Gary Conover 1907 Cascade Lane, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906 (719)-632-6217.

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:**

Dick Schottler found one at Chatfield in early or mid November, there had not been a sighting of two birds until this date as far as I know. So these two birds may or may not be one of the same found a little earlier.

**Light conditions:**

Excellent.

**Optical equipment:**

10X40 Baucsh & Lomb Binoculars .

15X60 Baucsh & Lomb Spotting Scope.

**Distance from bird:**

About 30 feet, they gave great views.

**Describe the bird's behavior:**

The two birds stayed together at all times. They dove several times. They were not near any other birds.

**Describe the bird:**

The size of the birds were about 25 inches. The overall shape was loon shape. The plumage of the birds were immatures because of the small white dots on back. Winter adult Red-throated Loons have bigger white spots on back. The color pattern is as follows: Both birds looked the same. The bill was gray on both birds. The eye color dark on both birds. The head color was grayish on both birds. The face color was grayish with white surrounding the eyes on both birds. The nape color was grayish with whitish

streaks on both birds. The neck down to the back was grayish with whitish streaks on both birds. The back was a little darker than the head and neck on both birds. The back was brownish with many small dots (typical of immatures) on both birds. The wings were also brownish with many small dots on both birds. The color of the tail seemed dark brown on both birds. The chin, throat and breast were all white. I did not see underparts of either bird. Also I did not see the legs or feet color of either bird. The shape of the bill was thin and both birds held their bill up turned and not straight like (Common & Pacific Loons). The wing and tail shape of both birds were typical loon shaped. I identified the birds by their small gray up turned bill, their overall loon shape, their lighter color (gray instead of a darker color as the other loons have), and by their smaller size (I did see four Pacific Loons on the lake that day and they all looked bigger than these two birds, however I did not see any of the Pacific Loons near these two Red-throated Loons).

Drawing: this is for the shape (loon shape) not grebe shaped.



**Describe the bird's song and call if heard:**

I did not hear any sounds.

**Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:**

The birds were observed on a large man-made reservoir, called Chatfield Reservoir, this location is in south Denver.

**How did you eliminate similarly appearing species:**

*Pacific Loon*: This species hold their bill straight. Also their back has bigger white lines. Also their bill is thicker and longer.

*Arctic Loon*: Their back has bigger white lines. Also their bill is thicker and longer.

*Common Loon*: This species is much larger. Also their bill is much bigger and is straight.

*Yellow-billed Loon*: This species is much larger and has a yellow bill.

**What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:**

*Red-throated Loon*: I have seen six previous ones in Colorado from 1990-1994. I have also seen many in California.

*Pacific Loon*: I have seen many in Colorado each fall since 1989, including at least eight in fall of 1995.

*Arctic Loon*: I have not seen this species.

*Common Loon*: I have seen many in fall and a few in spring in Colorado. I have also seen them in California, North Dakota, and Kansas.

*Yellow-billed Loon*: I have three immatures on Pueblo Reservoir, Colorado (one in 1992 and two 1994-1995).

**List books if they helped in your identification:**

I looked at *National Geographic Society's Bird's of North America* after the sighting.

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation X from memory \_\_\_\_

Reporting observer: Brandon K. Percival Signature: Brandon K. Percival

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