

2004-43 A

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

CBRC FILE #:

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) Red-throated Loon (Scientific Name) *Gavia stellata*

Date(s) of occurrence: 7 November 2004

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unknown Plumage: Juvenile

Exact location: Chatfield Reservoir, near Platte River delta. Viewed from old herony overlook and from Catfish Flats beach.

County: Mostly Jefferson, perhaps occasionally crossing into Douglas Nearest town: Littleton Elevation: About 5420 feet. (Chatfield Reservoir was quite low)

Length of observation: About 45 minutes Time(s) of observation: Intermittently between about 1 pm and 3 pm.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Jim Schmoker

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): First reported by Joey Kellner 31 Oct 2004, many other observers

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position): Mostly sunny day, light usually good, air OK.

Optical equipment used: Leica Ultravid 8 X 42, Leica APO-Televid 77 + 32X WW, Nikon Coolpix 4500

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): about 250 meters at closest, often much farther.

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: Suburban flood-control reservoir.

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: The bird was mostly feeding, going on long dives with minimal surface time. For some short periods it joined a feeding group of Common Loons, but when they worked back towards the middle of the lake the RTLO stayed up near the Platte River delta. For a little while the bird was observed preening and stretching its wings.

DESCRIPTION – A medium-sized diving bird. Small bodied and small billed for a loon (in direct comparison with Common Loons.) Bill needly, habitually held above the horizontal plane, gray without apparent dark tip or culmen. Crown dark, cheek and extreme upper throat pale, rest of throat, nape and neck nearly uniform medium gray. Neck stout, except when bird stretched. Eye dark, located at top of pale cheek patch. No eye-arcs observed. Back dark gray, no patterning discernable at the distance and with the air quality we had.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: Not heard.

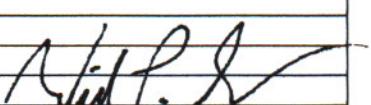
SIMILAR SPECIES – Clearly a loon- Diving ducks can be ruled out by bill shape and other differences. *Aechmophorus* grebes ruled out by bill color, neck shape and color differences. Red-necked Grebe ruled out by bill color, neck coloration differences, and habitual bill attitude. Cormorants expected in Colorado and Anhinga lack white bellies in addition to significant bill shape and color differences. No other loon species should show the uniform gray neck, throat, and nape of a juvenile RTLO. More specifically, Yellow-billed Loon can be ruled out because of size. Common Loon can be ruled out by direct comparison with 3 other Common Loons present. Pacific and Arctic Loons would be smaller than the Common Loons, too, but not as small as this bird. Also, both PALO and ARLO have more stout bills and don't habitually hold their bills up in addition to their completely different head and neck plumage patterns and coloration.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? This is the third Red-throated Loon I've seen, but the first Juvenile I've been able to observe well. I saw two other Pacific Loons and about 10 other Common Loons on the same day so my eye was primed.

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

This report was made from: Photos and notes made during observation

Date and time of written report: 11 November 2004

Reporting observer: William P Schmoker Signature: 

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

Photo 7 Nov. 2004, Chatfield Reservoir (bird is rolled away from the camera exposing its belly.)



(A)
Accepted

2004-63 Red-throated Loon

-----Original Message-----

From: Glenn Walbek [mailto:gwalbek@comcast.net]
Sent: Sunday, October 31, 2004 4:05 PM
To: Rachel Hopper; Tony Luekering; Joey Kellner
Subject: RTLO Chatfield

This bird was photographed today 10/31. I am sure it is the same bird from last week. Nice find Joey!

Glenn



