

Species: RED PHALAROPE

Phalaropus fulicarius

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): September 11, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 12:15 P.M. to 12:45 P.M.-MDT

Locality: Barr Lake State Park

Nearest Town: Brighton

County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Robert Andrews	- 1390 South Ivy Way, Denver, Colorado 80224	

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Bright sunlight from behind observers; air still.

Distance from bird (how measured): 250 feet (estimated by all observers)

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Non-breeding

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

I first noticed this bird (as a Phalarope) swimming just off a broad expanse of mud flats at the southeast corner of Barr Lake. I was probably about a quarter of a mile away at the time I first saw the bird through my telescope. However, due to the extremely soft condition of the mud flat, I was not able to get any closer than about 250 feet as I approached the bird. It continued to swim lazily at the edge of the mud flat in shallow water occasionally pecking at the water as Phalaropes will do. After the other observers arrived, the bird became a bit more active and finally took to the air, flew out over the water and away

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern.

Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

from us, circled about and returned to about the same place from whence it took off. After resting and swimming about, it took off again and repeated its previous flight. When it landed a second time it settled down and began preening.

An obvious phalarope. A bit larger than nearby and numerous Baird's Sandpipers. The question was which phalarope-Red or Northern? Wilson's were eliminated immediately due to this bird having a relatively short bill, white wing stripe when it flew and dark rump. The following field marks were determined after many minutes of viewing at high power on the telescope. Bill, short, stubby and relatively thicker at base than at tip; dark in color for entire length (none of the observers could determine any hint of yellow). Forehead, white. Black line from just in front of eye, through eye and enlarging over ear area. Top of head and back of neck light gray. Face, throat, chin and rest of underparts, clear white. Upperparts (back) light gray, marked faintly with two darker streaks across it (just as in Red Phalarope at Barr Lake in early September of 1975). There was no hint of white stripe markings characteristic of Northern Phalarope. Rump was dark and seen well when bird flew away from observers. Wings, darker than back with pronounced white stripe running length. All observers commented on the dark crown starting much further back on the top of the head than as pictured in Field Guides for winter plumaged Northern Phalarope.



Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

We were not able to make out any call note.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water reservoir (greatly depleted of its water supply) on high plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Wilson's Phalarope (winter plumage): Much longer and decidedly slender bill than that Red Phalarope. Has white rump and tail. Has dark wings without white wing stripe.

Northern Phalarope (winter plumage): Smaller, more compact phalarope. Has short bill like Red Phalarope, but is more slender and not as thick at base. Back is decidedly darker than Red Phalarope and is marked with prominent white stripes running up and down its length. Gray of crown begins at forehead rather than on top of crown as in Red Phalarope.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen many thousands of Wilson's Phalaropes throughout the west and a couple of times on east coast (Long Island, New York). Have seen an equal number of Northern Phalaropes particularly in Colorado and in California in all plumages. Seen a winter plumaged Red Phalarope last year at Barr Lake in Colorado. Have seen probably as many as 200 in a single day off Monterey Peninsula, California and off-shore in Monterey Bay and Catalina Island, California.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard Field Guides consulted to verify observation.

This report was written from notes made during x after x observation; from memory       

PRINT NAME: Jack Reddall

SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: 9-25-1976

Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street

Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110



Species: Red Phalarope Phalaropus fulicarius  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 11 September 1976 (also 13th) Time Bird Seen: about 1 hour to total

Locality: Barr Lake State Park

Nearest Town: Brighton County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Jack Reddall		

Hugh Kingery and Tom Gatz also saw it, but were not absolutely sure of the identification

Optical Equipment: 7 X 50 binoculars; 15-60X B&L Zoom telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Light Conditions: bright sun shining on bird from behind observers

Distance from bird (how measured): minimum estimated distance-250 ft.

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Nonbreeding

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

The bird was swimming on the surface of the lake, at the very edge of the lake next to a wide and extensive mudflat. The bird never came out of the water onto the mudflat. On the 1st day it was alone, but on the 2nd day it was mingling with (but not really consorting with) a flock of about-3-4 Northern Phalaropes.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

The small size and swimming clearly indicated it was a phalarope. The bill was only moderately long, quite thick, especially at the base, and black in color. The head was white, with a black auricular patch, and ~~black~~ from about the middle of the crown back across the nape and back of neck, connecting to the back. The back was mostly grayish, but appeared to have two darker streaks going across it. The wings were dark grayish, with a single white wing stripe in flight. Rump and tail not seen well enough to discern pattern. Entire underparts white, with possibly a pale reddish wash across the breast. Leg color not determined.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

None heard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Moderately large plains irrigation reservoir.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

The only species with which this bird could have been confused would be the Northern Phalarope. This bird was separated from the Northern on the following two considerations: (1) the bill was much too thick and heavy for a Northern, which has a quite thin bill; (2) the back color, which was basically gray, not blackish with white streaks as in a Northern. Other considerations, such as the slightly larger and chunkier appearance of the Red could not really be determined. The Wilson's, with its very pale gray upperparts, including face, and thin bill also was easily eliminated.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have seen the Red Phalarope twice before: one each on 16 and 20 September 1976<sup>5</sup> at Barr Lake, both in same plumage as the bird being reported now. I have seen many Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes, in both breeding and nonbreeding plumages on migration in eastern Colorado.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

All standard references confirmed the identification.

This report was written from notes made during \_\_\_\_\_ after X observation; from memory \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: Robert Andrews SIGNATURE: Robert Andrews DATE: 15 Oct 1976

Street Address: 1390 So Ivy Way Town and State: Denver, Colo 80224 ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110