

Species: Snowy Plover
(Vernacular name)*Charadrius alexandrinus*
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 13-14 April 1986Time Bird Seen: 6:45 am to 6:55 am
on 14Locality: Delta Sewage PondsDelta, Delta, CO

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binocs; B&L 60x scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Number of birds seen: one Sex: male Plumage: breedingLight conditions: bright sun; from rightDistance from bird, and how measured: 50-75 yds; estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Silent; not seen in flight. Fed on mud surface of sewage ponds. Seemed to glide over surface in short bursts. Would take 2-5 steps; teeter forward and pick surface of mud with bill a few times; then move forward and repeat. Took "mincing" steps.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Mud flats; sewage ponds.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Coen Dexter, Grand Junction

Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Small & light plover. About 6" long; much smaller & lower than Killdeer. Top-side is medium sandy-gray. Underneath is white. Bill is small, slender, all black. Eye is black. Legs are greenish gray and short. Forehead is white, extending as a narrow line over & behind the eye. Fore-crown, bordering forehead, is black. There is a blackish smudged earpatch. A pale white line on hind neck forms a nearly complete whitish collar. A black slash at the shoulder extends a short way down breast on either side but does not even come close to a complete breast band. Tail end is a little darker, perhaps is more shaded.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: Darting, gliding manner of feeding, short bill and medium legs indicate plover. Killdeer larger, darker, has 2 black breast bands. Semipalmated Plover is darker brown above, has orange legs, complete breast band, orange-based bill. Wilson's Plover has very stout bill, complete breast band. ~~Downy~~ Piping Plover is lighter still, has orange legs & orange based bill & a black band across crown; usually has complete breast band.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

1975 in Antero Res.; S.E. Colo. I saw several, also on Gulf Coast of Texas 1984, 85, 86. I saw all small plovers in 1984.

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

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