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APPENDIX IIDOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS  
FOR  
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: Least Tern ; Sterna albifrons  
(Vernacular name) (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.

Dates (s): June 19 - Aug. 26, 1978 at various times between (20 visits  
Time Bird Seen: 0400 to 2130 total)

Locality : Adobe Creek Reservoir and Horse Creek Reservoir

Las Animas, Otero/Bent/Kiowa County Lines, Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 7X35 Bushnell Binoculars & 15X45 Redfield Scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Minolta XE-7, 300mm Tamron  
Lens (3 ft.)

Number of birds seen: 3 Adobe Cr.  
5 Horse Cr. Sex: --- Plumage: Breeding & juvenile

Light conditions: Variable from excellent to total darkness

Distance from bird, and how measured: Birds (young) in hand, Adults within 1 foot

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Two pairs displayed typical breeding behavior. Adults attacked very determinedly, calling all the while. One pair displayed some territorial defense. Two individuals exhibited no breeding behavior.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Sand/Alkali flats interspersed with clumps of Scirpus an Typha. Both nests within 15m of water's edge.

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

Dr. R. E. Carlton, 2939 Chelton Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Mike Moulton, 5325 Garland, Arvada, CO 80002

2 nests  
both w/ 3 yrs



APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. 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. First view: A tern with light bouncy flight, small, not deeply forked tail. When it approached to within 20m, yellow bill with black tip evident. Dark primaries with gray wings. White tail with no dark edges, slight V but not deep as in Forster's. After consultation with field guide, distinctive white patch on forehead noted. Bill not stout as in larger terns. Wings appear very long in proportion to body - to a much greater extent than similar terns. The almost butterfly-like flight pattern was different from any other tern I've seen in Colorado. It was slightly similar to Black Tern flight but much lighter.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: Double call heard only when I or another bird disturbed the terns in their territory. Frequency increased as I approached nests and were loudest when the birds swooped down on me to within touching distance, striking me on one occasion.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: Forster's tern - orange bill, deeply forked tail, stronger flight, different behavior toward intruders at nest, different call and light primaries  
Black tern - Color, shape and call much different

Prior experience with this and similar species: Observed the Least tern in California in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Also observed in Southern Texas in Jan. of 1978. I have observed all species of Light-winged Terns throughout the U.S. since 1975 in California, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Canada. In Colorado I have observed Forster's & Black terns on many occasions. This report was written from notes made during X after        observation; from memory       .

Name (print) : Charles A. Chase III

Mailing address: 825 East Laurel, Fort Collins, CO 80524

Signature: Charles A. Chase III  
For C. Chase III

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee  
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections  
Denver Museum of Natural History  
City Park  
Denver, CO 80205