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COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

RED-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps grisegena

Location: Pueblo Reservoir; Pueblo; Pueblo County; Colorado

Date: October 26 - November 1, 1997

This bird was discovered by Brandon Percival earlier on October 26th.

Background:

I found this bird about 12 noon after a call from Brandon Percival. I watched it from a distance of about 300 yards on the 26th, until it gradually swam out of view (nearly a mile away). I watched it for about 20 minutes in poor light (nearly back-lit on the 26th). I was able to observe the bird with my B & L 10 x 42 binoculars and my scope (Kowa TSN-4 20-60X). I also saw it on tow more occasions, including on November 1st.

Description:

This bird was not very active; mainly swimming quietly alone or with a few Western Grebes. It was a winter-plumaged adult. Overall the bird was about 16" long (larger than the Horned Grebes nearby, but not quite as large nor as long-necked as the Western Grebes). The head, bill and body size were roughly comparable to Aechmophorus grebes but the neck was much shorter, and perhaps slightly more stout -- recalling a cross between a Horned Grebe and Aechmophorus grebe in shape. The head was a different shape than the larger grebes, being lower and longer with a flatter forehead. There was a bump at the back of the long, flat crown. The bill was long, slightly drooping and medium-stout. I could make out no color on the bill on the 26th, but on November 1st I saw that the mandible was pale at the base. The bird's plumage was overall flat dark gray on the uppersides. The flanks were lighter at the waterline, nearly white. The foreneck and cheek patch were whitish.

Similar Species:

Ducks are ruled out by their spatulate bill. Mergansers lack the white cheek patch and reddish foreneck. Loons are larger, longer and lower and lack the distinctive face pattern. Horned and Eared grebes are distinctly smaller (not approximately the size of a Clark's Grebe) and lack the combination of white cheek and yellow base to the bill. The Aechmophorus grebes were in direct comparison, and were much longer-necked, longer and thinner-billed.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all species of grebes and loons in Colorado and have extensive experience with Red-necked Grebes in other states (Washington and California).

This report is prepared from notes made at the time of observation.

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