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2002-207

Species (Common and Scientific Name): Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Date of Observation: May 8, 2002

Location: West end of Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo County, Colorado (observed from end of Swallows Road, looking east)

Time: approximately 7:45 PM

Weather: clear, calm and warm; sunny, but with sun dropping very low due to time of day

Reporting observer and address:

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Other observers: Andrew Spencer (gwwarbler@yahoo.com)

Bird was originally found and reported to the RBA by Lyle Anise (sp?). After our sighting, it was apparently refound by Brandon Percival, Dave Silverman, and others.

Observation time, distance, lighting and optics:

The bird was observed for a total of about 10 minutes. It was extremely distant, perhaps three-quarters of a mile to a mile away. The sun was just below the horizon at our backs. I was using a Nikon Fieldscope ED with a 20-45x zoom eyepiece.

Structure:

The bird was clearly a pelican. It was a very large bird with short legs, a long neck and an extremely long, straight bill, even longer than its neck, which it often kept tucked down against its breast, in line with its neck.

Though the bird was large, it was practically dwarfed by the American White Pelicans it was with. Even at the great distance, the size difference was striking. Andrew and I estimated that it was two-thirds the size of the white pelicans around it.

Plumage:

Due to distance and lighting, just about the only definitive thing I can say about plumage is that the bird looked entirely dark brown. From our vantage point its color seemed to be uniform. I would say it was roughly the color of a Brown Jay. :)

Separation from similar species:

Shape ruled out absolutely everything else except American White Pelican. Color and size rules out that species.

Previous observer experience with these species:

I have seen both North American pelican species many times in many states.

This description was written from: memory.

Date of Report: March 9, 2003

Other comments: none