

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐ UNUSUAL RECORD ☒**Species:** Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)**Date:** 5 September 2002 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** ? **Plumage:** First Basic (?)**Locality:** Martin Lake, Lathrop S.P. **Elevation:** ~ 6200'**Nearest town:** Walsenburg **County:** Huerfano**Time observed:** mid-day **Duration of observation:** about 10 mins

Description: Brandon Percival, Nancy Gobris, and I chased the Brown Pelican that had been present at Lathrop SP for weeks. After a bit of consternation, we managed to find the bird on the SW part of Martin Lake, perched on a peninsula of sand with a Great Blue Heron. We did not see it do anything but stand on the beach.

The bird was quite large, being about the same height as the Great Blue Heron standing right next to it (see picture). It was a medium brown on the neck, back, chest, wings, and tail. Parts of the head plumage (behind the face and above the eyes) were white. The belly was white. What I could see of the legs were not quite pale and not quite dark. The eyes were dark and surrounded by bare, gray facial skin. The bill grayish and enormous, being equal in length to about half the height of the bird.



Similar species eliminated: The only real ID contender is Peruvian Pelican, for which there are no records north of Colombia or, at best, Panama. Additionally, that species would have stood obviously taller than a Great Blue Heron. I do not actually recall the plumage differences involved.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >1000 of Brown Pelicans from New York south Florida, west to Texas and from Oregon south to Costa Rica.

Light conditions: sun above me and somewhat to my right

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Swarovski 8.5x40

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of about 35 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Nancy Gobris, Brandon Percival

Other observers who saw the bird independently: many, though I do not recall who found it

If photographed, type of equipment and film: Nikon Coolpix 995 through Leica scope

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Leukering", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: 14 January 2004, from memory and reviewing my picture