

Accepted

Species: LOUISIANA HERON

Hydranassa tricolor

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 22 May 77
31 May 77

Time Bird Seen: 1750 - 1735

to 1800 1740

Locality: South Platte R. 3.8 km upstream (W) of Masters bridge

Nearest Town: Masters

County: Weld

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Optical Equipment: 7x35 binoculars, 15-45 Redfield spotting scope, unaided eye

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Cloud cover 20% (22 May); 0% (31 May). Light conditions good.

Distance from bird (how measured): From 130 m - 25 m (paced)

Number of Birds Seen: 1 (once) Sex: Plume: Adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

22 May 77: Louisiana heron on sandbar, Snowy Egret nearby - "parasitizing". L. Heron moves quickly, but without wing movement, pecks at items on sandbar at water's edge. Move to wooded island opposite bird. Observe 10 min. See Egret fly first. Louisiana Heron spots me, flies.

31 May 77: From horseback - observe Louisiana Heron 5 min. Active foraging. In water about 3 cm deep. Picks at small items, perhaps 0.5 cm? Can't tell what items.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

At 100-130 m A slender, long legged wader. Dagger shaped bill. Size slightly larger than Snowy egret. slate ~~color~~ color. Light belly, Snowy Egret forages about 10 m. from heron. From front, 2, pattern against light underparts at breast.

At 25 m, could see rust-colored plumage down back and next to ~~anterior~~ bend in wing.

At this point, bird was oriented ~ 135° from my line of sight (a rear-quarter view). The bird was darker than a great blue heron. As it flushed, I could again see its light

belly and breast. Wingbeat was much less lobed than a great blue heron. The wing/body ratio seemed less than the great blue heron.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc: No call given, even upon flushing.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: South Platte River. Slow moving and shallow water. Bird on a sandbar, near a small wooded bank. River course about 130 m wide at this point, with about 75 percent sandbar-unvegetated.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Little blue heron - Subject with rust colored back plumes, light underside. Did not have a brown head, but a slate colored head.

Great blue heron: Subject much smaller. Darker plumage than Great Blue Heron. Dark head, whereas great blue shows much light color in head region. Some of the great blue herons were showing bright colors in soft parts (breeding) at this time. This bird had dull soft parts.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen Little Blue and Louisiana herons regularly while living 18 mos. in northwest Florida. Have studied great blue heron for many years. Since 1976, have observed ~~this species~~ great blue herons for ~ 200 hours.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Initial observation checked on-the-spot with Birds of North America by Robbins, Brown, Zim. I attempted to keep any references from influencing my record, other than comparing the subject with field description in the field guide.

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

PRINT NAME: Gary C Miller SIGNATURE: Gary C Miller DATE: 13 June 77

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