

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN UNUSUAL RECORD

1. Species: LOUISIANA HERON | Hydranassa tricolor 2. Number: 199
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)
3. Location: VALLEY-HI COUNTRY CLUB RESERVOIR - COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO
4. Date(s): MAY 14, 1978 ^{AIKEN AUDUBON SPRING BIRD COUNT} 5. Time bird seen: ca. 12:00 Noon to 12:30 pm. Over →
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern. (Describe in great detail all parts of the plumage including beak and feet coloration: In addition to the diagnostic characteristics; however, include only what actually was seen in the field): The bird was a rather uniform slate blue on its back and back of neck; distinct thin white plume on back of head; clear white underbelly; white up part of the front of the neck, with the reddish color being somewhat patchy on the sides of the base of the neck; the long plumes on the back were a pale rusty color; legs slaty-gray; feet yellowish-green; bill pale blue-gray, long and slender; eye distinctly red; pale gray to white under chin. ~~Small~~ Neck very slender, small head.
7. Description of voice, if heard: No voice
8. Description of behavior: Wading in water generally up to top of thighs; actively fishing and catching minnows.
9. Habitat - general: Small lake
specific: Golf course reservoir, shallow sandbar w/cattails.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated 6, 7 & 8 above; Explain: At first we thought the bird might be a Little Blue, but on closer inspection it was obviously a Louisiana.
11. Distance (how measured?): Approximately 50-75 ft. - estimated by eye.
12. Optical equipment: Binoculars, Baush & Lomb 40x Zoom spotting scope.
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer): Clear, sunny day; sun almost directly overhead - noonish
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: No previous with this species.
15. What made you think this species was unusual or rare? Through checking the range map in Birds of N.A. (Robbins, et al.) & Colo. Birds, Bailey & Niedrach
16. Other observers: Thomas Kinrade, Prof. Biology, Colorado College
17. Did others agree with your identification? yes - Mrs. Mary Cook, Fountain, CO
18. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
19. Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation: Birds of N.A., Robbins, et al., Birds of Colorado, Bailey & Niedrach;
20. If bird was photographed, please attach pictures and describe equipment used: Nikkormat 35mm, with a 210mm Vivitar Series 1 telephoto lens.

Signature Lynn P. Grace

Street Address: 820 Paxco Rd.

Date Prepared: May 27, 1978 City & State: Colo. Springs, Colo. 80904

(USE THE REVERSE, OR ADDITIONAL PAGES, IF NECESSARY)

After first observing the heron, I decided to go back the following afternoon (Mon., May 15, 1978) to photograph the bird. The conditions were not optimum - it was late afternoon, partly cloudy and very strong wind was coming from the south. I photographed the heron and decided to return the following morning (May 16) for another attempt. The bird was there, fishing along the edge of the sand bar in water up to his thighs and with the water still, and good morning light (8:00-8:30 am) I was able to get some excellent photographs of the heron. I estimate that I was between 30-50 feet from him at one point. His red color was much more distinct in the morning light - the red plumes down his back and on the sides at the base of the neck.

Note: One week previous to the May 14 bird count, a severe ~~to~~ 3-day ^{snow} storm blew in from the South and Southeast, quite possibly accounting for this unusual sighting. Other birds were also seen in the area whose ranges are considerably farther south of Colorado.

18. EUNOR/HARRY WILS
ED/MARTHA CERRY
MATHON SPEERS
DE. T. MARSH