

ACCEPTED 7-0

CFO-ORC-FILE# 1998-7

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

Results: 15th

rec'd 7-8-98 ✓

Species: Tricolored Heron Egretta tricolor
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

Dates: 5/16/98

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: ?

Plumage: Adult

Locality: Union Reservoir, NW corner

Elevation: ~ 5000

Nearest town: Longmont

County: Weld

Time observed: ~ 6:30 P.M.

Duration of observation: 15 min.

Other observers with you: Reported 2 days later.

Other observers who saw the bird independently: (Gary Matthews, Eric Plage, Fern Ford)

Light conditions: Good

Optical equipment: 2 60 mm scopes Plus binos

Distance from bird: ~ 1/4 mile

Describe the bird's behavior: Loafing on water edge, stretching

Describe the bird (what you actually saw): over

Describe the bird's song and call if heard: N/A

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: edge of lake in sheltered cove next to cattails.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species: over

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: extensive experience NJ, FL.

List books if they helped in your identification: over

This report was written from notes taken during , or after observation

 or from memory X.

Reporting observer: Peter Plage

Signature: Peter Plage

Address:

118 Huron Ct.

Boulder, CO 80303

Mail to: Mark Janos, 10 Sedum Court, Pueblo, CO 81001.

Thanks to D.W. King who nagged me into writing this report.

While doing Boulder County Audubon's Birdathon on May 16 we wandered into a Tricolored heron at Union Reservoir. We were viewing it from just east of County Line Rd., Boulder County, which is at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away. The bird was standing on the lake edge facing S or SW so it presented a front/side view in direct comparison to white pelicans next to it. Most obvious at first glance was its size (smaller than a great blue), color (generally darker), and white lower breast/belly. We had time to observe the bird leisurely and compare it to 2 or 3 field guides. We observed a narrow white plum hanging from rear of head. We also had an opportunity to review how bad some of the guides are depicting coloration. (i.e. Birds of N.A. shows a yellow beak (beak appeared blue-grey). The clincher for a couple of uncertain birders in the group was when it stretched a wing, showing extensive white underparts. Unfortunately that was about as active as the bird got. We left to continue birdathon. Based on position of the bird it could only be viewed from the west, not from the road north of Union.

Besides Birds of N.A. we looked in Peterson's Western Birds and perhaps one other book. Aside from its rarity in CO there was no reason to linger over i.d.

CFO-ORC FILE # 1998-7

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD X

rec'd 6-5-

Species: Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)**Date:** 18 May 1998**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Alternate**Locality:** Union Reservoir**Elevation:** about 5400'**Nearest town:** Longmont**County:** Weld**Time observed:** about 19:40 - 19:55 MDT**Duration of observation:** about 15 minutes

Description: Sue Bonfield and I went to Union Reservoir in hopes of refinding the Tricolored Heron that Pete and/or Eric Plage had found two days prior and which was reported on the RBA. We were standing near the northwest corner seeing no small herons, when I found a smallish heron flying toward us across the lake from the south. It landed with some Am. White Pelicans that were standing on a submerged sandbar. I got Sue on it and that was the bird! We observed it for a while, I photographed it, then I took detailed field notes while watching it through my scope.

The bird was a medium-sized heron that was very lanky, almost dainty, and was dwarfed by the nearby pelicans. It had a long, thin bill that was pale with a vague dark tip. The head and neck were bluish with a thin, white line running from the chin down the neck along the front of the neck. The blue of the neck changed to a purplish or maroon color at the lower end. The lower neck feathers were very long and hung over the upper breast, creating a purplish bib with a sharp U-shaped demarcation between these neck feathers and the white breast. The upper back was blue-gray, but the rest of the back was covered with long, filamentous feathers that hung down the back and over the tail. These feathers were brownish at the middle back and paled to pale gray at the tips. The wings were dark blue-gray, approximately the same color as the back. I could not tell the length or color of the tail, only that it was much darker than the belly. The breast and belly were bright white. In flight, its long legs trailed well behind the bird, but upon landing, it was standing in water nearly to its belly, so I could not discern the leg color at first. However, I eventually got a good look at the legs and they were grayish-green. The wing linings were bright white, contrasting with dark grayish-blue flight feathers.

Similar species eliminated: Great Blue Heron, in fact, all dark herons, can be readily eliminated by plumage pattern; Great Blue also by size, as they would stand nearly as tall as a pelican.

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 1000s of Tricolored Herons from New York to Texas, most recently while in Texas in late April. I have also seen 100s to 1000s of all regularly-occurring North American species with which it can be confused.

Light conditions: sun to my right and low

Optical equipment used: Zeiss 7x42 and Kowa 30x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at about 35 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Sue Bonfield

Other observers who saw the bird independently: at least one of the Plages (Pete or Eric), who was/were the original finders, according to the RBA

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I photographed with a Canon rig with a 300mm lens with a 1.4x teleconverter; slides are included with description.

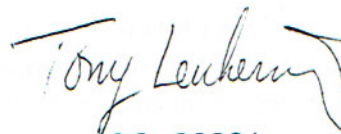
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 2 June 1998 directly from notes written while observing the bird