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## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

## RUDDY TURNSTONE

Arenaria interpres

Location: Nee Noshe Reservoir; about 15 miles SE of Eads; Kiowa County, Colorado

Date: May 23, 1992

Setting:

I was alone when I found this bird at about 3:30 p.m. It was along the western shore of the narrow peninsula that projects into the south edge of Nee Noshe Reservoir. The bird waded in very shallow water or walked along the muddy and sandy edge. I observed it for about 5 minutes at very close range (25-50 feet) in my Kowa scope at 20-60X and my binoculars. The sun was bright and high overhead giving me excellent light. Viewing conditions were very good and the bird was relatively tame. It walked along the shore, or stood listlessly during observation. I did not see it feed. As it walked it allowed excellent views from all angles. The bird eventually flew, hugging the shore just above the surface of the water. It flew around the point and out of view, which ended my observation.

Description:

This was a beautiful bird in breeding plumage. It was about 10" long and not very long-legged. It was about the size of a Killdeer. It was rufous-brown above on the back and wings with a thick black diagonal stripe through each folded wing. The head and face were white with a grey crown and harlequin black and white pattern to the lower face. This consisted of a black stripe down through the eye and across the lower face that curved and widened forward into a broad black bib on either side of the white breast. The rest of the underparts were white. The bill was rather short, only about half as long as the head, dark and wedge-shaped. The legs were rather short, giving the bird a stubby look, and were colored bright orange.

In flight the bird was brightly patterned but difficult to describe. A thick white wingbar was obvious in the spread wing as was the black and white patterned rump and tail. The rest of the upperparts in flight were boldly patterned black, white and rufous.

Similar Species:

The medium size and bold white, black and rufous pattern eliminate most shorebirds. Avocets are much larger with recurved bills. Small and large plovers such as Snowy, Piping and Black-bellied lack the white face, bib, rufous and black back and wedge-shaped bill. The Killdeer is plainer above in flight and has two breast bands. Phalaropes have thinner and longer bills, different habits and lack orange legs. Sandpipers are plainer with less bold patterns and lack the wedged bill. Black Turnstone has no rufous and the head is not largely white.

Experience with Species:

I have seen many Ruddy Turnstones on ocean beaches. I have seen one (or two) previous Ruddy Turnstones, in juvenile plumage, in Colorado, a juvenile in September 16, 1989 at Cheraw Lake.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.



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