

1997-27
ACCEPTED 7-0

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

RUDDY TURNSTONE

Arenaria interpres

Location: Lake Cheraw; Cheraw; Otero County; Colorado

Date: September 5, 1997

Brandon Percival and I were birding together on the afternoon on September 5th. We came upon a lone, dull-plumaged Ruddy Turnstone along the shore of Lake Cheraw about 1:00 p.m. The bird was working the shore near the road on the west edge of the lake. We observed it from about 1:00 - 1:30 p.m. from a distance of about 75 feet. I used my KOWA 20-60X TSN-4 scope and we both also observed it in our binoculars. The light and conditions were good.

Description:

This was a juvenile or perhaps a non-breeding adult. It looked like a washed-out breeding bird -- smudged, dull grays and browns where the adult is black, rufous and white. It was a medium-sized shorebird, about the size of adjacent Killdeer but with shorter, thicker legs. The legs were orange. The bill was black, sharp, medium-length and chisel shaped, being somewhat up-tipped on the lower mandible. The back was dark brownish black, with the individual feathers having golden edges. The undersides were white with a blotchy black curved shape on the sides of the breast. It was a short, thick-necked bird that foraged slowly along the lake edge. We did not see the bird in flight.

Similar Species:

The medium size and wedge-shaped bill eliminate most other shorebirds. The Killdeer has two breast bands. Phalaropes have thinner and longer bills, different habits and lack orange legs. Sandpipers are plainer, especially in flight, and lack the chisel-shaped bill and most lack orange legs.

Experience with Species:

I have seen many Ruddy Turnstones on ocean beaches. I have seen six previous Ruddy Turnstones in Colorado, including juvenile birds.

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

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

