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SPECIES: Little blue heron
(Vernacular Name)Egretta caerulea
(Scientific Name)DATE(S): May 23, 1992TIME OF OBSERVATION: 16:55 TO 17:15EXACT LOCATION: West side of Platte River delta at Chatfield Reservoir State Recreation AreaNEAREST TOWN: LittletonCOUNTY: Jefferson

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

None.OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: Zeiss 10x40 Binoculars; Bush & Lomb Criterion 4000 4" Reflecting spotting Scope (40WEATHER CONDITIONS: 54°F, overcast, calmBIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: Overcast, No sun; overall even lighting.DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 40-60 yds (estimated)NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: ? unknown PLUMAGE: 2nd year immatureBEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: Was observed feeding slowly near the shoreline of the Reservoir
And out into the water (As Deep as the Birds Body feathers!). Nearby was a feeding
Snowy egret (Egretta thula) which fed in the shallow water and was never seen to
feed out in the deeper water.HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.):
Head & neck Dirty white with patches of gray; 2 whitish "Breeding" Plumes were observed
on the back of the head, (I never knew that 2nd year Birds had Plumes!)
Similar to Plumes on a Black-crowned Night Heron. ~1 1/2" to 2" Long

EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.):

Eyes appeared dark; Lores bluish-gray (same color as base of bill).LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): Bill relatively long and straight; Base of
bill bluish-gray, outer (almost half) portion of bill was black.LEGS & FEET: Legs and feet were both grayish-green; No dark line was observed on either
leg as a Snowy Egret might have.UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): Back mostly gray with
some white feathers interspersed.UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): Mostly Dirty
white with some patchy gray on neck and body.

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RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):

Bird was not seen in flight so pattern or position of individual retrices could not be determined, but it appeared mostly gray with some white retrices interspersed.

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): Wings mostly gray; Some Primaries (lowest wing feathers on a standing bird) were white.

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):

No vocalizations were heard during observation.

HABITAT: Shoreline of fresh water man-made reservoir.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - Bill all dark; feet yellow; immature snowy has dark "line" on front of legs; Snowy egrets don't have gray feathers interspersed in body, flight, tail or neck feathers!

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - Adults have reddish-yellow bills & gold head & body plumage; immatures have yellow bill and usually yellowish legs not dark bi-colored bill & greenish-gray legs.

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) - Lack gray feathers in immature plumage on neck; immature reddish has pink base of bill not bluish-gray like this bird. Legs on reddish egret are black.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - Have seen many in all ages & plumages in California and Colorado.

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - Have seen several in Colorado in breeding and basic plumages.

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) - Have seen only a few near Rockport, Texas (December 1989).

Tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - Have seen several in Texas (1989) and one in Colorado (1991). This bird in immature plumage does not look all white by 2nd year.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

National Geographic Society "Birds of North America" 2nd edition

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING ☒ AFTER ☐ OBSERVATION; ☐ FROM MEMORY

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