

5-93-45

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

LITTLE BLUE HERON

Egretta caerulea

Location: Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, Colorado

Date: September 5, 1993

Setting:

This immature white bird was wading with about 6 Snowy Egrets on the northwest corner of Lake Henry. It spent most of its time feeding in shallow water, wading in and out of bull rushes. I watched it under sunny conditions for about 10 minutes in my scope at about 100-200 yards. Eventually it flew off with the Snowy Egrets and landed much further away and in heavier cover. I was able to observe it wading and in flight.

Description:

The bird stood about 24" tall. It was a small, slender heron about the size and shape of a Snowy Egret. In flight it had shallow, quick, buoyant wingbeats, unlike larger herons.

It was overall white in color. The legs were long and greenish-gray. Like the legs, the feet were dark. The bill was sharp, pointed and dagger-like; light gray basally, grading into darker gray at the tip. The small patch of bare skin around the eye was dull gray. The bird lacked any plumes or long feathers. When it flew, I could see a small area of grayish at the wing tip.

Similar Species:

Great Egret and Reddish Egret are larger, with more stout bills and lack grayish wing tips. Snowy Egret is almost identical but adults have black legs with yellow down the back of them and yellow feet; longish white plumes; black bill; yellow lores. Immature Snowies have grayish legs that are yellower behind; all dark (not two-toned) bill; lack grayish wing tips.

Experience with Species:

I have experience with all North American herons and egrets including Reddish Egret, Tricolored Heron and Little Blue Herons as recently as March 1991 in south Florida.

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

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