

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

5-93-113 A

Species: Little Blue Heron
(Vernacular name)

Egretta caerulea
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 26, 27 April 1988

Time Bird Seen: 12:10-12:30 AM } 4-26
7:18-7:30 PM }
9:20-9:45 AM on 4-27

Locality: Hart's Basin (Latilong 16 "Montrose")

Eckert, Delta County
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: B&L discover scope 20-45x; Nikon 9x30 binocs.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: _____ Plumage: ad; non-breeding; nearly brood

Light conditions: Excellent on 4-27, bright sun at back; low or oblique sun on 4-26

Distance from bird, and how measured: 30 yds on 4-27; 75-200 yds on 4-26

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Long-legged wader. Waded in about 6" of water off grassy edge of lake. Stalked small fish; stopping; peering at an angle; lowering head; lunging into shallow water. Patient and stalking when no fish present, then jerky and active, plunging and catching fish when present. After caught small, 2-3" long fish. Sometimes shivered, flapped its plumage.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Open water, grassy edge of lake.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Vicky Jones

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Small, slender heron about 24" long. About size of adjacent White-faced Ibis but slender & longer-necked with a slightly smaller body than the ibis. Body slightly larger than Greater Yellowlegs, much smaller than Great Blue Heron. Plumage all over dark slate grayish-blue, perched and in flight. In best light, the neck has a purplish cast that is not apparent at long range or poor light. Bill is long, slightly drooping and dagger-like; it is dull grayish blue with bright light blue patches on cutting edge. Lores & bare skin on face gray with bright light blue patches. Iris is pale yellow. Legs are long and dark olive gray in color, as are feet. Tip of bill and the distal 1" are dark or dusky in color. There are short, slender, hair-like plumes down hind neck, lower fore-neck and faint on upper wing coverts.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

- Long bill and long wader-legs indicate a heron.
- Night-herons are gray, black, white with patterned faces.
- Green Heron smaller, patterned, shorter necked w/ orangish legs.
- Reddish Egret larger, 2-toned with pink/black bill with abrupt border.
- Great Blue Heron larger, more patterned with white fore-neck, chestnut thigh.
- Tricolored Heron patterned with white, gray, tan.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Much experience w/ all N.A. herons including Little Blue, Tricolored & Reddish Egret

This report was written from notes made during after observation; from memory .

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Signature: Mark Janos

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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