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CFO-ORC FILE # 23-80-2

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☒

UNUSUAL RECORD ☐

A

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: ARCTIC TERN | STERNA PARADISAEA  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s): 11/9/79 Sept. 19, 1979

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: HALF MOULTED INTO WINTER PLUMAGE

Locality: UNION RESERVOIR Elevation: 5000'

Nearest town: LONGMONT County: WELD

Time(s) observed: 16:50 → 18:50

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) 1 HOUR

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

PETER MOULTON and TERRY ROOT

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

MOSTLY OVERCAST BUT PALE SUNLIGHT PART OF THE TIME

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): TELESCOPE 20X BINOCULARS 7X

Distance, and how measured: 200 feet ESTIMATED

If photographed, type of equipment and film: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else photographed the bird? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

\* SITTING ON SHORE, 200' AWAY, FLYING OVER THE RESERVOIR.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field:

THE BIRD WAS WITH SW 6 COMMON TERNS, ABOUT 10 FORSTER'S TERNS AND 3 BLACK TERNS, AND SO EXCELLENT COMPARISONS COULD BE MADE. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES WERE

1) MOST OBVIOUS WAS THE VERY SHORT LEGS, WHICH WERE RED, WHEREAS FORSTER'S LEGS WERE BLACK COMPARED TO THE COMMONS AND FORSTERS, THE DISTANCE FROM THE TORSAL JOINT TO THE GROUND WAS ABOUT 2/3<sup>RD</sup> AS LONG. WHEN STANDING, THIS BIRD WAS MUCH CLOSER TO THE GROUND. THE SHORT LEGS MEANT IT 'WADDLED' WHEREAS ALL THE OTHER TERNS 'WALKED'.

2) THE HEAD WAS MORE ROUNDED THAN THE OTHER TERNS, AND HAD MORE BLACK ON IT. THE FOREHEAD WAS WHITE, BUT MOST OF THE SUMMER BLACK CAP REMAINED, AND WAS DARK. THE COMMON TERNS HAD THE CENTRAL PART OF THE CAP WHITE FLECKED WITH BLACK.

THE FORSTERS HAD THE BLACK EAR PATCHES THE REMAINING PART OF THE CAP WAS BROWN.

ARCTIC

COMMON

3/ THE BILL WAS ONLY 80% AS LONG AS THE OTHER TERMS, AND WAS MAINLY DULL RED, BUT BLACK ALONG THE TOP OF THE UPPER MANDIBLE. THE COMMON TERMS BILLS WERE A MORE YELLOWY RED, AND THE FORSTERS BILLS BLACK. THE BILL WAS THICKER AT THE BASE THAN THE FORSTERS' BILLS. Description, (continued) THE ARCTIC'S BILL WAS ABOUT THE SAME LENGTH AS A BLACK TERM'S BILL.

4/ THE BIRD WAS ABOUT 1/4" SMALLER THAN THE COMMONS AND FORSTERS, AND NOTICEABLY SMALLER IN BUILD. THE TAIL WAS WHITE WITH A DARK OUTER WEB, AND SHORTER THAN THE WING TIPS BY ABOUT 1". THE BILL WAS ALSO 1/4" SHORTER THAN THE COMMONS OR FORSTERS.

5/ THE MANTLE WAS QUITE DARK AND MORE SCALED THAN THE COMMONS OR FORSTERS. HOWEVER, IT WAS MUCH LIGHTER THAN THE BLACK TERMS. THE BIRD WAS ALSO MUCH LARGER THAN THE BLACK TERMS.

6/ THE UNDERWING WAS PURE WHITE WHEN FLYING AT A DISTANCE. WHEN CLOSE, A THIN DARK TRAILING EDGE WAS NOTICEABLE. THE ~~WING~~ WINDOWS WERE LARGE. THE COMMONS HAD A SMALL WINDOW AND MOST OF THEIR PRIMARIES ARE VERY DARK; THE FORSTERS WERE BROWNISH UNDER THE WING, NOT AS WHITE AS THE ARCTIC. Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from the common perch, in flight, duration): BIRD DID NOT CALL, OR I DIDN'T HEAR IT CALL. SHOW MUCH BLACK IN THE WING WHEN STANDING, WHEREAS THIS BIRD SHOWED VERY LITTLE DARK OR NONE SOMETIMES.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

STANDING ON MUD FLAT AND FLYING OVER UNION RESERVOIR.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

COMMON TERM by overall size, leg size, wing pattern, head shape and color, bill size and color.

FORSTER'S TERM by overall size, leg size, head shape and color, bill size and color, leg color.

ROSEATE TERM, NEARLY ALWAYS AT SALT WATER, TAIL LENGTH, BILL COLOR, UNDERWING COLOR.

WHITE CHEEKED TERM, AFRICAN TERM, MANTLE AND TAIL COLOR.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

SOME IN ENGLAND, WHERE COMMON AND ARCTIC TERMS ARE COMMON.

FORSTERS AND COMMON TERMS FOR 3 YEARS IN COLORADO.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: ROBBINS et al. BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA.

HEINZEL, FITTER & PARSLOW. THE BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE.

b) after observation:

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

Date and time report was written: 13/9/79 Sept. 13, 79

Reporting observer: PETER GENT Signature: Peter R. Gent

Address: c/o NCAR BOULDER COLORADO 80307.

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below.

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,  
CITY PARK  
DENVER, COLORADO 80205

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐ UNUSUAL RECORD ☐

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: ARCTIC TERN | STERNA PARADISAEA  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): 11-12 SEPTEMBER 1979Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Plumage: ADULT, ENGAGED IN PREBASIC MOLTLocality: UNION RESERVOIR Elevation: CA 1800MNearest town: LONGMONT County: WELDTime(s) observed: 9/11 - 12:15-12:50; 16:45-19:30; 9/12 - 12:20-12:40Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 1 1/2 HRS ALTOGETHER

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

JOHN AND JOYCE COOPER LAKEWOOD, COLORADO  
DR. PETER GENT 933 E. MOORHEAD CIR. BOULDER, COLORADO  
TERRY ROOT BOULDER, COLORADO

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

DR. THOMPSON MARSH DENVER, COLORADO  
CHARLES CHASE III BOULDER, COLORADO

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

SKY HEAVILY OVERCAST; LIGHT FLAT AND WEAKOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60 X 60MM SCOPE (BAUSCH & LOMB)Distance, and how measured: CA 60M (SCOPE RANGEFINDER / VISUAL ESTIMATE)

If photographed, type of equipment and film: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else photographed the bird? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):  
FLIGHT - AS IN *S. HIRUNDO* WITH RELATIVELY SLOW, DEEP WINGBEATS; UNLIKE THE FLUTTERING FLIGHT OF *S. FORSTERI* WITH THE LATTER'S RAPID, SHALLOW WINGBEATS. PERCHED BIRD NERVOUS, CONSTANTLY PREENING OR WADDLING CLUMSILY ABOUT MUDFLAT; FREQUENTLY SHIFTED WEIGHT FROM FOOT TO FOOT, THOUGH FOR NO EVIDENT REASON. FED FROM ALTITUDE BY HEADLONG DIVES INTO WATER; UNLIKE GULL-LIKE FEEDING STRATEGY OF *S. FORSTERI*. NO INTERSPECIFIC AGGRESSION WITH OTHER TERNS (3 SPECIES PRESENT).

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern.

Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field:

AN OBVIOUS *STERNA* TERN, WITH LONG, POINTED WINGS AND LONG, FORKED TAIL; REMNANT OF BLACK CAP; SLENDER, DAGGERLIKE BILL; GENERALLY GRAY ABOVE AND WHITE BELOW. ALL FIELD MARKS COMPARED TO NEARBY *S. HIRUNDO* AND *S. FORSTERI*, AS ALL THREE SPECIES WERE FREQUENTLY OBSERVED TOGETHER IN THE SAME SCOPE FIELD.

SIZE - 1-2 CM SHORTER THAN LARGEST *S. HIRUNDO* PRESENT; CA 1 CM SHORTER THAN *S. FORSTERI*. BULK APPROXIMATELY 90% OF LARGEST *S. HIRUNDO*.

MANTLE - MEDIUM GRAY, DARKER THAN IN *S. FORSTERI*, CLOSE TO SHADE OF *S. HIRUNDO* MANTLE. DORSAL FEATHERS WITH NARROW AND INCONSPICUOUS WHITISH MARGINS.

HEAD - PROPORTIONATELY SMALLER AND MUCH MORE ROUNDED IN PROFILE THAN IN CONGENERS. FACE AND FOREHEAD WHITE. A BLACKISH CAP FROM MIDCROWN TO NAPE AND SURROUNDING EYES; BLACK-WHITE TRANSITION BLENDED; WHITE FOREHEAD IMMACULATE.

RUMP AND TAIL - WHITE, CONTRASTING SHARPLY WITH MANTLE; TAIL WITH DUSKY WEB ON EACH LATERAL MARGIN, BUT NO DUSKY TIP ON ANY INNER RECTRIX. TAIL TIPS 1-2 CM SHORTER THAN WING TIPS (PROBABLY NOT AN IMPORTANT CRITERION IN MOLTING BIRDS). DUSKY EDGES NOT VISIBLE IN FLIGHT.

WING, CLOSED - CONCOLOROUS WITH MANTLE; NO DUSKY CARPAL BAR.

Description, (continued)

WING, SPREAD, TOPSIDE - UNIFORMLY CONCOLOROUS WITH MANTLE, BUT OUTER 1-2 PRIMARIES, SOMEWHAT DUSKIER.

WING, SPREAD, UNDERSIDE - SNOWY WHITE; PRIMARIES VERY NARROWLY TIPPED BLACKISH-GRAY (NOT BLENDED INTO WHITE GROUND COLOR); TRANSLUCENT "WINDOW" IN ALL BUT OUTERMOST 1-2 PRIMARIES AND ABOUT THE OUTER HALF OF THE SECONDARIES.

UNDERPARTS - WHITE

BILL - PROPORTIONATELY SMALL, SHORTER THAN HEAD AND VERY SLENDER AT BASE; SLIGHTLY DECURVED; DARK BLOOD-RED, DUSKIER ON CULMEN AND TOWARDS TIP, BUT NOT OBVIOUSLY BICOLOR. EVEN ALLOWING FOR SMALL SIZE OF BIRD, BILL COMPARATIVELY MUCH SMALLER THAN IN S. HIRUNDO OR S. FORSTERI IN ALL DIMENSIONS.

FEET - BLOOD-RED, AND DARKER AND REDDER THAN IN ANY EXAMPLE OF S. HIRUNDO OR S. FORSTERI PRESENT. TARSUS FROM "KNEE" TO FOOT ONLY  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$  LENGTH OF SIMILAR DIMENSION IN ANY S. HIRUNDO OR S. FORSTERI PRESENT. VERY SHORT-LEGGED APPEARANCE, AS THE BELLY FREQUENTLY BARELY CLEARED THE GROUND, AND THE GAIT WAS A CLUMSY, PECULIAR WADDLE.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): NONE HEARD

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

LOWLAND WARM-WATER RESERVOIR, IN FLIGHT OVER WATER AND STANDING ON LAKESIDE MUDFLAT (SOMETIMES PERCHING IN WATER). TWICE OBSERVED SWIMMING IN DEEPER WATER (BRIEF PERIODS). IN COMPANY WITH S. HIRUNDO (5), S. FORSTERI (10), CALLONIA (3) AND LARUS PIPITCA (40).

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

S. HIRUNDO - BY SMALL BILL; BILL AND FOOT COLOR; SHORT TARSUS; ROUNDED HEAD SHAPE; LACK OF LARGE DUSKY TRIANGLE ON UPSIDE OF SPREAD WING; AND EXTENSIVE BLENDED DINGY AREAS ON UNDERSIDE OF SPREAD WING; PRESENCE OF EXTENSIVE TRANSLUCENT WINDOW IN SPREAD UNDERWING.

S. FORSTERI - BY BILL SIZE; BILL AND FOOT COLOR; TARSAL LENGTH; LACK OF EXTENSIVE SILVERY TRIANGLE ON SPREAD UPPERWING; WHITE TAIL; HEAD SHAPE. ALL EXAMPLES OF S. FORSTERI PRESENT DISPLAYED EXTENSIVE, THOUGH DECIDEDLY PALE, DINGY WASHES ON UNDERSIDE OF PRIMARIES. NONE SHOWED A LARGE TRANSLUCENT WINDOW IN SPREAD WING (UNDERSIDE).

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

S. HIRUNDO - OBSERVATIONS OF CA 100 INDIVIDUALS IN JUVENAL, BASIC AND ALTERNATE PLUMAGE STATES IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. THIS IS THE COMMON

STERNA AT THE LOCATION, IN MIGRATION.

S. FORSTERI - VERY FREQUENT OBSERVATION IN ALL MAJOR PLUMAGE STATES.

S. PARADISAE - NONE PREVIOUSLY.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: NO FIELD GUIDE AVAILABLE DURING OBSERVATION; FREE DISCUSSION WITH OTHER OBSERVERS.

b) after observation: USUAL FIELD GUIDES, INCLUDING EUROPEAN GUIDES; AC BENT LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN GULLS AND TERNS; RUSTALL & "PELAGIC BIRDS OF MONTEREY BAY," IN WESTERN BIRDS, VOL. 7, NO. 4, PP 128-131.

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

Date and time report was written: 22:00, 12 SEPTEMBER 1979

Reporting observer: PETER MOULTON

Signature: Peter J. Moulton

Address: 8050 NIWOT RD #35 LONGMONT, COLORADO 80501

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DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,  
CITY PARK  
DENVER, COLORADO 80205

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A

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Arctic Tern | Sterna paradisaea  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s): 12 Sept 1979

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: — Plumage: Prebasic molt in process

Locality: Union Res Elevation: ~1800m

Nearest town: Longmont County: Weld

Time(s) observed: 1630-1700

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) 1/2 hr.

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Betsy Webb Denver Museum Natural History

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Peter Gent  
Peter Moulton

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Overcast

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 7x35 Bushnell 20X Bushnell scope.

Distance, and how measured: ~275-200' visual estimate.

If photographed, type of equipment and film: —

Who else photographed the bird? —

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

sitting on shore phalag, flew approx 1/4 mile, returned, flew again and disappeared.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern.

Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field:

Sitting w 3 S. hircunda & 4 S. forsteri. One of each species on opposite sides + one point in time. The bird stood out obviously from the other birds.

Dark red bill dusky on upper distal tip of mandible. Bill proportionately shorter than others.

Very squat appearance w legs < 2/3 of others from foot to tarsal joint. Breast + belly almost rubbing the ground while nearby birds were leaner + further off the ground. Did not move while on ground. Feet, when visible, dk red.

Head was much rounder than the other terns w substantially more solid black cap remaining. Forehead was pure white ending approx mid crown. The other terns were much more advanced in the prebasic molt.

Folded wing showed little or no dark in <sup>po</sup> compared to the ~~same~~ others especially S. hircunda.

(OVER)

Description, (continued)

In flight most  $\rho^o$  appeared narrowly edged w/ dk dusky. Very large translucent window in underwing obvious

Top of wing not noted (~~was~~)

Shorter rounder head + stout body gave the bird a different flight character than the others.

The ~~common tern's~~ <sup>*S. hirundo*</sup> molt resulted in very little blk inc-p + that was speckled w/ white. ~~much longer~~ narrower appearance in flight. Small windows in inner primaries much less than in *S. paradisae*. *S. forsteri* head had ear patches, much longer bill, slim shape, lighter flight, almost no window in underwing.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): Not heard

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:  
NW end Union Res., shallow reservoir w/ mud shore bottom, scattered cat tail, reedy bullrush on shore.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

*S. hirundo* - small bill, very squat appearance, round shorter head shape, relatively short legs. Blk wing edgings much less broad than *hirundo*, bill + feet color, very large windows over extensive portion of underwing. Very little dusky in wing when sitting, smaller.  
*S. forsteri* - small bill, short legs, squat shape, bill + leg color, large window in underwings, head shape + color

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

Arctic - Calif - 3 observations in flight.

Common tern - Colo, Calif - many times.

Forsters - 5 years in Colo, Calif, Texas. 100's

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: None.

b) after observation: J.P.V. Woghe, Calif Birds (1): 29-36. ID of the common tern + the arctic tern.  
Stallcup "Belgian Birds of Monterey Bay" West. Birds 7(4) 128-131  
various field guides.

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

Date and time report was written: 20 Sept 1979

Reporting observer: Charles Chase III

Signature: Charles Chase III

Address: 1380 Brown Cir. Boulder CO 80303

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