

2003-129

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

CBRC FILE #: 2003-129

RESULTS: A

Print this page and then fill out. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species (please include common and scientific names): **Tundra Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*

Date(s) of Observation: 18 November 2002.

Number of birds seen: one.

Sex: unknown.

Plumage: juvenile.

Exact location: Fish Hatchery Ponds, west of the Valco Ponds parking lot. There are two ponds here surrounded by a chain link fence, the bird was on the southern most pond.

County: Pueblo.

Nearest town: Pueblo.

Elevation: 4750 or so.

Length of observation: 20 minutes.

Time(s) of observation: 720am to 730am and 900am to 910am.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: none.

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Rich Miller found this bird on 17 November 2002, and thought the bird was a Tundra Swan (he saw 2 adult and 1 juvenile Tundra Swan at Lathrop State Park, *Huerfano County*, on 11 November 2002). I called other Pueblo birders to go look for it, so hopefully others will see it, and perhaps photograph it.

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observer(s) position): Excellent, sun to the east, I was looking west at the bird.

Optical equipment used: 10x42 binoculars.

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): These ponds are quite small, so I would say 30 meters away.

Was (were) bird(s) photographed?

If so, are you submitting photos?

Who took the photograph(s)?

Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: The bird was observed on a small fish hatchery pond, below Pueblo Reservoir dam, near the Arkansas River. The pond has grass and weeds around it.

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits:

The bird was swimming and feeding in the pond with other waterfowl. There were quite of other ducks on the pond, including Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser.

DESCRIPTION -- This is the **most important** part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird, how you placed the bird in the general group that you did, and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Features to include are the color(s) and/or patterns of the head, eyes, bill, back, folded wings, open wings, tail, chin, throat, breast, sides, flanks, belly, vent, and legs. Also, please include, where possible, shape of the whole bird, of the wings - folded or open, of the bill, and of the tail. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. We welcome attachments of additional sheets of description, drawings, field sketches, or copies of field notes.

The overall size was a water bird that was large and mostly white. The shape of the bird was long necked mostly white water bird. The bird was no doubt a swan by the large size, mostly white plumage, and by its shape, too large for a Snow or Ross's Goose. The bird was a juvenile plumaged bird because of the brownish overall color the bird had, and by the pink in the bill. The color of the bird was overall white, though with grayish brown feathers all over, including the head, long neck, black, and wings. The bill was mostly pink, including the base. There was some black on the bill toward the end. The head color was mostly grayish brown. The eyes were dark. The bill was mostly pink, with some black toward the end, and pink near the base. The back was white with brownish gray feathers. The folded wings were the same color as the back. I did not see the open wings. The tail was white. The chin was brownish gray. The throat was brownish gray. The straight long neck was brownish gray. The sides and flanks were brownish gray. The belly and legs were in the water, so that was seen well. The shape of the bird was a long necked water bird, with a round back, that was a white bird with a lot of brownish gray feathers overall. The bill is the important feature to tell the species a part. The bill shape was rounder from the one eye to the other eye. The edge of the bill below the eyes to the chin was more curved, and not straight. The bill did not look as huge as like Trumpeters have. The over all bill shape didn't look sloping, it looked straight. The tail looked short and square shaped. As there weren't two species of swan present, I can't really same much about the length of the bird. Both swans side by side are much different in length, though with one bird present, that can't be much of a field mark.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted:
Nothing heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration.

Trumpeter Swan: The bill shape and color was wrong. This species bill is black toward the base in juvenile plumage, as well as pointed border, and straighter edge, all of which this bird didn't have. Also, the bill on this species is more sloping, and not as straight as this bird.

Mute Swan: Much different shape, more of a rounder neck, as well sloping bill shape.

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

Tundra Swan: I have seen a few Tundra Swans in both juvenile and adult plumages in Colorado over the years, beginning in 1988, with 4 adult Tundra Swans and 1 adult Trumpeter Swan at CF&I Lakes, south of Pueblo in November.

Trumpeter Swan: I have seen a few Trumpeter Swans in Colorado in both juvenile and adult plumages. Also, I have seen Trumpeter Swans in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, and in western Nebraska (February 2002).

Mute Swan: I have seen countable Mute Swans in British Columbia in August 2002, and two non countable ones in Colorado (Pueblo and Durango).

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): After writing this report, I glanced at both *The Sibley Guide to Birds* and *National Geographic*

Society's Birds of North American, Third Edition. Both seem to confirm that bird I saw was indeed a Tundra Swan and not a Trumpeter Swan or Mute Swan.

This report is from notes made from (check one) ☒ notes made during observation ☐ notes made after observation ☐ later from memory.

Date and time of written report:
11:15am on 18 November 2002.

Reporting observer: Brandon K. Percival

Signature: *Brandon K. Percival*

Address: 835 Harmony Drive, Pueblo West, CO, 81007-2632.

Send report to: Colorado Birds Record Committee, Tony Leukering, PO Box 660, Brighton, CO 80601.

2003-129

12/14/02, Pueblo Reservoir. Photos by Larry Semo

