

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

A

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

Species: Trumpeter SwanCygnus buccinator

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name)

Date(s): 10 January 1978 (but had been present since about early December 1977)Number of birds seen: SevenSex: ?Plumage: AdultLocality: Lake De WeeseElevation: 7888 ft.Nearest town: WestcliffeCounty: CusterTime(s) observed: about 1030-1100Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) Almost continuously for 1/2 hr. at least

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

Steve Larson

Cammie Edgington

Barry Knapp

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

David and Carolyn Griffiths

John and Joyce Cooper

Winston William

Van Truan

Jack Reddall

Brockner

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

Excellent-sun shining on birds from behind observer; sometimes behind cloudsOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60X Zoom telescopeDistance, and how measured: Minimum estimated distance-50 yards

If photographed, type of equipment and film: _____

Who else photographed the bird? Steve Larson, Barry Knapp

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

All seven birds (and an immature Whistling Swan) remained together in a flock. They were feeding in mud and shallow water along a marshy edge to the frozen lake. When approached too closely, the birds flew off to another part of the shore, then gradually returned to the original area (the west end of the lake) after we retreated. Sometimes also slept.

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:

Enormous, completely white swans. Legs and feet black; feet huge. Large, long bill, completely black, with a very gradual sloping profile. All seven individuals had the red grin stripe, which was visible under the best conditions and closest distances, being most visible when mouth was open as the birds fed. Neck, when straight and fully extended, was at least as long as the body and probably even longer. All seven birds had varying amounts of rusty stain on the head (most concentrated on the crown).

Description, (continued)

X

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): When disturbed or when in flight, they called. It was a rather high, sonorous and tinny call. After observing the birds, I listened to the Whistling and Trumpeter calls on the Peterson western records, and the Trumpeter calls were identical to what I heard in the field, and the Whistling calls completely different from what I heard in the field.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: Medium-sized reservoir, in a grassy mountain valley.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Whistling Swan only similar species. Easily eliminated by voice alone; also huge size, very long neck, very sloping forehead and bill (like a Canvasback) and red grin patch were supplemental aids to identification. An immature Whistling was in the flock of seven Trumpeters. This bird was absolutely dwarfed by all seven Trumpeters, which appeared to be about 25-30% larger (in body length, wing width and neck length).

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

I have observed Whistling Swans on a number of occasions, in Colorado and California. I have never observed Trumpeter Swan, except for a probable, but never positively identified, individual at Boulder in April 1976.

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

a) at time of observation: None.

b) after observation: Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America, by Frank Bellrose consulted, and confirmed the identification. R. T. Peterson's recording of western birds consulted, and the calls I heard in the field matched precisely the Trumpeter recording, and were totally different from the Whistling Swan calls on the record (listened to next day). This report was written from notes made during X, after observation; from memory .

Date and time report was written: 11 January 1978

Reporting observer: Robert Andrews

Signature: Robert Andrews

Address: 1390 So. Ivy Way, Denver, Colorado 80224

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

Species: Trumpeter Swan Cygnus (Cbr) buccinator
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): January 14, 1978Number of birds seen: Eight Sex: Unk Plumage: 7 white(adult), 1 imm.Locality: Lake DeWeese approx 5-6miles north of Elevation: ?Nearest town: Westcliffe, County: Custer Co.Time(s) observed: approx 1200-1240hrsDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) approx 45 minutes

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

Peter Gent- 933 2F East Meadow Boulder, CO 80303Peter Moulton 8050 N. Wet Rd. #35 Longmont CO 80501

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

Many- Jack Reddall, Englewood, Dave Griffiths-Pueblo, Van Truan-PuebloBob Andrews-Denver, Steve Larson-Boulder addresses & phone#s in telephone bk.

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

Diffuse, light snowfall obscured sun to our backs.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Swift 8.5X44 binocs., 15-60zoomscopeDistance, and how measured: as close as 30 meters (estimate)If photographed, type of equipment and film: 400mm telephoto, color slide 200ASAWho else photographed the bird? Peter Moulton

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

Flock was loafing on west edge of the frozen lake. As we approached closer they became wary and did much calling, and extended their necks for brief periods of time. When calling, the pink strip on the edge of the lower bill was clearly visible. Eventually the flock wandered out onto the ice.

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:

There was little else comparable to give overall size. Seven of the birds were basically white with rust staining, the eighth bird was smaller, with dusky markings about the head and remiges, indicating a first winter bird.

I believe the immature bird was also a Trumpeter despite its shorter height, because when standing with the adults, I directly compared its tarsal length with the nearest individuals. There was no difference in tarsal length. likewise there was no difference in relative distance from nostril to bill tip. Its bill color was black proximally and distally with a pinkish-black area midway along the bill. Leg color and color of the webbing was black and blackish to light gray respectively. (Color of the webs was not clear as to color, but seemed lighter than the legs and digits. When calling its voice was not distinguishable from the adults.

The white birds (adults) called frequently giving the characteristic peculiar high-pitched notes. (2-3 per set) They all showed the pink strip along the lower

(OVER)

Description, (continued)

bill, sloping bill profile, absence of a yellowish spot anterior to the eye (lores).

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

Calls given in 2-3 notes, nasal yet loud, almost buzzy. given while walking on ice

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

frozen lake

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

1-voice, 2-bill shape not concaved like whistling, 3-pinkish bill strip,
4- absence of loreal mark.

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

Trumpeter- Yellowstone, 2 breeding pairs June 1975

whistling- Abundant central valley of California all winters seen weekly
1969-1973

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification: other birders prompted our trip to Lake DeWesse to see the "Trumpeters"

a) at time of observation:

b) after observation: Kortright 1967, Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America.

This report was written from notes made during____, after X observation; from memory____.

Date and time report was written: January 18, 1978

Reporting observer: Bruce E Webb Signature: Bruce E Webb

Address: Dept. EPO Biology University of Colorado, Boulder CO 80309

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

Species: Trumpeter Swan (Vernacular Name) Olor buccinator (Scientific Name)Date(s): Jan 4 - Feb 12 1978 ¹⁹⁷⁷ Dec 24 first reported could date back to Dec 1st, 1977?Number of birds seen: 7 Sex: unknown Plumage: adultLocality: Lake Delaware west end Elevation: 8000-Nearest town: Westcliffe County: CusterTime(s) observed: 445 to 5 pm 1/4 - 1030 to 1130 am 2/17 ^{various times after}Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) 10 min 1 hr - 1/2 hr

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

Rosemary and Chris Knight
Elisavet & Harry Wells
Bill & Lucy HelrodEd & Martha Curry
Steve Simpson
Verda Morrison
Carolyn Bruffett

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

Van Thuan - John & Julie Cooper, Jack Reddick, Steve Larson
Barry Knapp - Bob Anderson - Cammie Davila Don Silverman

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

most of the time very goodOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 30p Bushnell scope, 10x50 binocularsDistance, and how measured: estimated from 200 yards to much fartherIf photographed, type of equipment and film: SLR Mamiya 200 lens F&K Kodachrome IIWho else photographed the bird? Van Thuan - I have not seen his pictures

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

As soon as I saw birds; enormous size, heavy bodies, long necks, I knew they were Trumpeters - call was convincing. We had been listening to 24 Whistling Swans late Nov 1977. I Walzenburg. Trumpeter call deeper, more different.

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 Trumpeter generally is so much larger than the Whistling. Neck is thicker, longer - Bill is heavier, larger, anguler than Whistling. Feet are much larger - Way they walk is much different than Whistling also the way they carry their necks - much straighter, longer & taller - no yellow spot on bill all black apparently all seen birds were adult or nearly so because of nearly white plumage. some iron stain on faces

Description, (continued)

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): The trumpeter call is unmistakable deeper, slower than whistling

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

grassy area near inlet of mountain fresh water lake - pretty shallow on west end where swans spent most of their time

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? by experience in observing both Trumpeters and Whistling in the hand, in zoos and aviaries, in the wild - I have examined several dead Trumpeters and many Whistling

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

I had seen 2 live birds near Jackson Wyo July 1961 - Have seen several in zoo - I saw several dead specimens in Bear River Research Station Brigham City Utah - have seen thousands of Whistling Swans three the years - mounted one Trumpeter - at least 5 or more Whistling

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

a) at time of observation: I knew the instant I saw the birds what they were from experience - I discussed field marks with a number of experienced observers - a lot of

b) after observation: reference material just doesn't have it - Kartwright Ducks, Geese & Swans of North America is pretty good.

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

Date and time report was written: _____

Reporting observer: DAVE A. GRIFFITHS

Signature: Dave A. Griffiths

Address: 32 Massari Rd Pueblo Colo 81001

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

Species: TRUMPETER SWANOLOR BUCCINATOR

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name)

Date(s): 15 JANUARY, 1978Number of birds seen: 7

Sex: _____

Plumage: ADULTLocality: LAKE DEWEESEElevation: CA 7800 FTNearest town: WESTCLIFFECounty: CLUSTERTime(s) observed: CA 11:00 - 11:45 AMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) CA 45 MINUTES

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

PETER GENT - BOULDER, COLO. - 449-1750BRUCE WEBB - #3 CHAUTAUQUA BOULDER, COLO. - 444-7907

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

DAVE & CAROLYN GRIFFITHS - PUEBLO, COLO.STEVE LARSON - BOULDER, COLO.I BELIEVE THAT VAN TRUAN OF PUEBLO, COLO. FOUND THE BIRDS.

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

LIGHT FAIR - DIFFUSE AND FLAT OWING TO HEAVY OVERCASTOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60X60MM SCOPEDistance, and how measured: 250 FT MINIMUM (SCOPE, CAMERA LENS RANGEFINDERS)If photographed, type of equipment and film: 400MM TELEPHOTO, 200 ASA PUSHED TO 400 ASAWho else photographed the bird? BRUCE WEBB AND STEVE LARSON

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

FIRST SEEN AS THEY WERE RESTING ON SHORELINE. AS WE APPROACHED, EVEN TO 500 FT, THEY BECAME VERY ALERT AND WARY. STANDING, THEY HELD NECKS VERY ERECT, BILLS HORIZONTAL. FED BY GRAZING ON SHORE GRASSES, BUT LIFTED HEADS TO SWALLOW. WATCHED US FIXEDLY AT EVERY APPROACH; CALLING FREQUENTLY. THEY EVENTUALLY WALKED ONTO SURFACE ICE. THEY STAYED IN A COMPACT GROUP, BUT KEPT A CERTAIN DISTANCE BETWEEN EACH OTHER; OCCASIONALLY A TOO-CLOSE ENCROACHER RECEIVED A BITE FROM A NEIGHBOR. NOT SEEN FLYING OR SWIMMING.

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:

TYPICALLY SWAN-SHAPED, BUT SIZE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE AS NO IDENTIFIABLE WHISTLING SWAN PRESENT FOR COMPARISON.

PLUMAGE ENTIRELY SNOW-WHITE, EXCEPT FOR HEAD AND UPPER NECK, ESPECIALLY ON FORECROWN, WHICH WERE LIGHTLY TINGED WITH RUSTY - PROBABLY FROM TIPPING IN OXIDE-RICH WATERS.

TARSI, TOES, WEBS, LORES, BILL, EYE - BLACK

BILL AS LONG AS HEAD, VERY HEAVY AT BASE; A SMALL, NARROW PINK STRIPE WAS VISIBLE ALONG LATERAL MARGIN OF LOWER MANDIBLE, ESPECIALLY BASALLY. THIS STRIPE WAS VISIBLE WHEN BIRDS TIPPED HEADS OR OPENED BILLS SLIGHTLY. IT WAS ALSO VISIBLE, EVEN WITH BILLS CLOSED, AT CLOSE RANGE.

HEAVINESS OF BILL AT BASE CAUSED FOREHEAD TO HAVE A SLOPING, RAKISH PROFILE, SIMILAR TO CANVASBACK'S HEAD PROFILE.

(OVER)

Description, (continued)

ANOTHER, SMALLER, IMMATURE SWAN, LIKELY ANOTHER TRUMPETER, WAS PRESENT. BODY WHITE, NECK AND HEAD GRAYISH, DARKENING ANTERIORLY. BILL SHAPE SIMILAR TO OTHER SWANS, THOUGH SMALLER, PROPORTIONATE TO SMALLER SIZE OF BIRD. PROBABLY BULKED 50-60% OF ADULTS. BILL DUSKY BASALLY AND DISTALLY AND NEARLY ALL OF LOWER MANDIBLE ALSO DUSKY; A "SADDLE" OF A PINKISH COLOR COVERED CULMEN AND EXTENDED NEARLY TO LATERAL MARGIN OF UPPER MANDIBLE. Tarsi, TOES AND WEBS APPEARED DUSKY, EXACT SHADE INDISTINGUISHIBLE UNDER LIGHT CONDITIONS. STAYED TO EDGE OF FLOCK, OR A LITTLE AWAY FROM FLOCK, NOT HEARD TO CALL UNLESS ITS CALL WAS IDENTICAL TO CALLS OF IDENTIFIED TRUMPETERS.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): CALL - A RATHER LOW-PITCHED (LOWER THAN CANADA GOOSE'S), FAR-CARRYING, MONOSYLLABIC HONK, GIVEN WHILE BIRDS STOOD ERECT, WATCHING US; LIKELY USED AS AN ALARM, AS NOT GIVEN WHILE FEEDING.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: OPEN, GRASSY SHORELINE OF MIDDLE ELEVATION RESERVOIR. ICE.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

WHISTLING SWAN - THINNER BILL, MORE ROUNDED HEAD PROFILE. USUALLY WITH YELLOW LOREAL SPOT. LACKS PINK STRIPE ON LOWER MANDIBLE. CALLS HIGHER - ~~HIGHER~~ PITCHED, LESS FAR-CARRYING, MORE BISYLLABIC. THE LACK OF LOREAL MARKINGS MAY BE MORE USEFUL THAN USUAL AS ALL SEVEN INDIVIDUALS HAD UNMARKED LORES, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO STRETCH THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY. CALL NOTES AND THE PINK BILL STRIPE WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT MARKS.

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

HAVE OBSERVED SEVERAL WHISTLING SWANS IN COLORADO (NONE WITHOUT YELLOW LORES); OBSERVED A SINGLE BIRD, PROBABLY REFERABLE TO O. BUCCINATOR, IN APRIL, 1976 (CALLS NOT HEARD, BILL STRIPE INCOMPLETE). HAVE NOT OBSERVED IDENTIFIABLE TRUMPETERS BEFORE THIS.

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

a) at time of observation:

BIRDS WERE FREELY DISCUSSED DURING OBSERVATION, BUT NO OTHER INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE.

b) after observation:

FIELD GUIDES, A.C. BENT LIFE HISTORIES, BAILEY & NIEDRACH

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

Date and time report was written: 4:30 PM, 16 JANUARY, 1978

Reporting observer: PETER MOULTON

Signature: Peter J. Moulton

Address: 8050 NIWOT RD. #35 LONGMONT, COLORADO 80501

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