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# COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

## TRUMPETER SWAN

Cygnus buccinator

Location: Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, Colorado

Date: February 28, 1993

This bird was discovered by Lin Lilly.

### Setting:

I received a call from Brandon Percival that Lin Lilly had discovered 4 Trumpeter Swans on Lake Henry that day. Brandon and I drove out there later the same day and easily found the birds at the north edge of the lake. We observed the birds floating along the shore for about 10 minutes in a Kowa 20-60x scope from about 200 yards. They then flew to the western edge of the lake and we left them.

### Description:

These were huge birds: 2 adults and 2 immatures. The adults were about 4 feet long and their plumage was immaculate white. The legs and feet were black. The bill was black, huge, shoelike and with a straight edge to the upper mandible. There was no yellow in the lores area. The eye was black and connected to the black of the bill by a narrow blackish bridge of skin. At our distance I was not able to observe a pink edge to the bill. The birds had long thick necks that were held upright and straight. The immatures were nearly as big and shaped the same as the adults. However their plumage was all white washed with grey. Their bills had a pinkish wash, especially on the sides.

### Similar Species:

Tundra Swan is also all white and nearly as big. The Trumpeter Swan is larger, thicker-necked, straighter-necked, with a larger, straighter-edged bill. The Trumpeter lacks the yellow bill spot of the Tundra. The Trumpeter Swan immatures retain grey plumage well into the spring (as did these birds) while the Tundra Swan immatures appear white by early spring.

### Experience with Species:

I have seen both species of swans in Colorado, though only one Trumpeter Swan before: an adult at CFI lakes in 1989.

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

Mark Janos

Mark Janos  
10 Sedum Ct.  
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## Colorado Field Ornithologists - Sight Record Form

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- New State Record ----------  
- X - Rare bird in CO ----------  
Trumpeter Swan  
(Species)-----  
*Cygnus buccinator*  
(Scientific name)

## Date(s):

February 28, 1993 11:20 - 11:50 ~~AM~~ 30 minutes

## Locality:

Lake Henry, Crowley County, Ordway, Colorado.

Nearest town, county and state)

## Optical equipment:

10x40 Bausch &amp; Lomb Custom binoculars.

15-60 zoom Discoverer Bausch &amp; Lomb Spotting Scope.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Not photographed.

Number of birds seen: 4 Sex: unknown Plumage: 2 adult &amp; 2 imm

## Light Conditions:

excellent

## Distance from bird and how measured:

100 yards

## Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The birds swam along the north shore of the lake, after we got closer they flew to the north west side of the lake.

## Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Lake

## Other observers who independently identified the bird

(Please list names and address):

Lindsay Lilly early morning on 2/28

Mark Janos 2/28 with me

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. The field marks used to identify the bird. Include Size, overall shape, plumage, and color pattern; details on shape of bill, wings, and tail.:

I identified the birds by their straight long necks and very large size. And their bill shape which was long.

The birds size was large know head to head comprision with any other species of swan. The shape was typical swan shaped with a straight neck. The color pattern was simply



white on the adults and light brown on the heads and necks and white on back and wings of the immatures.

Adults:

The bill was large and black, I did not see any yellow tear drop or any red in the bill, however it most likely had the red. The eyes were small and black. All of the head was white. The long neck was white. The flanks, wings, back, tail, and all under parts were white. The legs were black and the feet were not seen.

Immatures:

The bill was a dull pink and it was large. The eyes were small and black. The head and neck on both birds were light brown. The back, flanks, wings, tail, and underparts were white. The legs were black and the feet were not seen.

The shape of the bill was long. The shape of the wings were normal swan shaped and the tail was normal to swans as well.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds if heard:

No sounds heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Tundra Swan: This bird has a smaller bill and not as long bill.

Mute Swan: This has a curved neck.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Trumpeter Swan: I've seen 3 before these in Colorado and 1 in Wyoming.

Tundra Swan: I've seen four in Colorado.

Mute Swan: I've never seen one.

Field Guides used to determine sighting:

National Geographic Society Birds of North America

This report was written from notes made during \_\_\_\_\_ after X; from memory \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: Brandon K. Percival

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Signature: Brandon K. Percival

Return form to: CPO Records Committee

Bill Prather

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