

ACCEPTED 6-1

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Trumpeter Swan

Number: 2 immatures

Location: North Sterling Reservoir, Logan Co., CO

Habitat: large lake

Date: 16 November 1997

rec'd 12.26.97

Time: 3:20-4:00 p.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 W. Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird(s): When I arrived at the dam, I quickly spotted two swans flying over the lake. The birds were headed my direction and eventually flew directly over me at a distance of no more than 15 meters. I took a couple of photos (not yet developed) of the birds before they continued to the east. Several minutes later, the birds returned to the lake and landed in the north bay with Canada Geese. The birds were at least twice the size of the largest Canada Goose. Both birds were generally a dull white color with irregular brown/gray/rusty markings, especially on the neck, mantle, and wings. On the water, both birds held the neck kinked along the upper back before extending it upward. The distance and limited time on my part prevented me from studying the birds in great detail. However, I noted that the bill was massive: longer than the length of the head with a very broad base and flat culmen. The central portion of the bill was dull pink with a dark tip and base. The bare facial skin at the base of the bill extended to the eye and was, at that point, the same width as the diameter of the eye. The whole effect was that the eye did not stand out on the face. When the birds flew over me, both were giving a series of short calls which I can best describe as muffled squeals.

Similar species and how eliminated: The birds were clearly either Tundra or Trumpeter Swans. The extremely large size strongly favors Trumpeter Swan. Other marks used to rule out Tundra Swan were the browner tones to the plumage and bill size and shape. Note that my identification was based largely on bill shape and general body size and plumage.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with partly cloudy skies and the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was mostly 300-500m, but the birds were within 15m when they flew over me. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen numerous Trumpeter Swans in Iowa and Nebraska, including an adult at Lake McConaughy, Nebraska on 15 November 1997. Also familiar with Tundra Swans from Iowa and North Carolina (where 70% of the Atlantic population winters).

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none written

How long before this form completed: completed 17 November 1997