

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

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

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

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CFO-RC FILE X: 2002-120

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name) **Trumpeter Swan**

(Scientific Name) *Cygnus buccinator*

Date(s) of occurrence: 12/31/02

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: ?

Plumage: Adult basic

Exact location: Valmont Reservoir

County: Boulder

Nearest town: Boulder

Elevation: ~5360 feet

Length of observation: About 15 min

Time(s) of observation: Approx. 11:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Chris Wood

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Same bird probably seen at other localities around Boulder in preceding weeks by many observers, including Bill Kaempfer and David Waltman.

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Good sunlight from behind our observing position

Optical equipment used: Kowa TSN 823 w/ 32X W.A. eyepiece, Nikon Coolpix 995

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): At closest, bird was about 100 meters away. Photos taken from about 200 meters.

Was bird(s) photographed? yes

If so, have you submitted photos? yes

Who took the photographs? Bill Schmoker

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Municipal power plant cooling water reservoir.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): The bird flushed out from the S. shore of Valmont reservoir with several dozen Canada Geese. It swam out to a distance of about 200 meters where it watched us for a while and then tucked its head in to sleep.

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes): Extremely large, this bird dwarfed even the large forms of Canada Geese nearby. The bird was entirely white except for the black feet, legs, eye and bill, and faint iron staining on the back of its neck. The neck was extremely long and powerful looking. The bill was long and had a straight top edge that continued in the same line as the forehead. When the bird looked at us, a distinct sharp "V" pointing down the top border of the bill was visible.

Describe bird's call or song: Not heard.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: The only birds this large and white are pelicans and swans. Bill shape and proportions rule out pelicans. The extremely large size, shape of the bill, fairly straight border line between the bill and face feathers, and "V" pattern at the top border of the bill eliminates Tundra Swan. Adult and 1st winter mute swans don't have black bills.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I observed a family group of 2 adult and 3 juvenile TRUS in January at McKay Lake, Broomfield Colorado, and I have observed many dozens of TRUS in Wisconsin and the Yellowstone area. I have seen one Tundra Swan in Colorado.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): After observation I consulted The Sibley Guide to Birds and Natural History of the Waterfowl (Frank Todd).

This report is from notes made during and after observation.

Date of written report: 12/31/02

Reporting observer: William P. Schmoker

Signature: 

Reporting Observer's Address: 3381 Larkspur Dr.

City: Longmont

State: CO

Zip: 80503

Phone: 303/702-9589 email: bill.schmoker@bvsd.k12.co.us



CLW Photo Record Form**RC FILE X:** 2002-120
RESULTS:**Reporting Observer:** Christopher L. Wood, zeledonia@cfo-link.org
8050 Niwot Road, #4, Longmont, Colorado**Signature:** **Species:** Trumpeter Swan, *Cygnus buccinator***Date (s) of occurrence:** 18 December 2002 (likely present from at least 29 November).**Number of birds seen:** One adult.**Location:** Fentress Lake, west of Niwot, Boulder County, Colorado**Length of observation:** 12 minutes**Time (s) of observation:** 3:10—3:30pm**Other observers who saw the bird:** Bill Kaempfer earlier in the day. Found by Ann Hicks on 19 November.**Conditions:** Mostly sunny, warm, NW wind 10-25mph.**Optical equipment used:** Leica 8 x 42 binocular. Leica APO Televid scope with 32 x eyepiece. Below images all captured stills taken through Leica scope using Sony DCR-PC9 video camera.**Distance from bird (s) (estimated unless otherwise noted):** 25-70 meters**Habitat:** Small man-made reservoir.

Video stills of Trumpeter Swan
© Christopher L. Wood



Details: Bill found a swan west of Niwot, presumably the Trumpeter Swan that Ann found in late November, which had not been reseen since that date.

When I arrived at Fentress Lake, I immediately located the swan. The large size, mostly black swanlike bill, and all white plumage left no doubt that this was a swan. The lack of extensive orange on the bill allowed us to easily eliminate Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*.

The included images show the bird well, although these images are a bit overexposed. The bird had more rust staining on the head and neck that was easily visible. These photos also do not show the red near the base of the bill where the maxilla and mandible come together.

The long bill, with a relatively straight base to the bill without a sharp curve near the gape, and sharply pointed "V" on forehead formed by bill are all easily seen on these images and rule out Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*.

Previous Experience: I have carefully studied Trumpeter Swans in Wyoming, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Colorado. I have carefully studied Tundra Swans in Wisconsin, New Jersey, Missouri, Alaska and Colorado.

References: None.

Date of written report: 31 December 2002. *This report made from notes during observation.*

Photos 1/14/03
Left Hand Reservoir

