

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD REPORT
☒ RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD ☐ NEW STATE RECORD

CFO-CRC FILE NO. 1-76-106
☒ ACCEPTED ☐ REJECTED 9/15/76
1-76-106

Species: Red-throated Loon Gavia stellata
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 27 October 1976 Time Bird Seen: 12:30 PM to 1 PM

Locality: Sloan's Lake

Nearest Town: Denver County: Denver

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Van Remsen, John Cooper, Patty Echelmeyer, Don Thatcher		

Optical Equipment: 7 X 50 binoculars; B&L 15-60X Zoom telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: Excellent: sun shining on the bird from behind me

Distance from bird (how measured): Minimum estimated distance-200 ft.

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult-intermediate between breeding and nonbreeding plumage

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

the bird was observed swimming and diving in relatively shallow water at the northwest corner of the lake, once seen to rear up and stretch its wings

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

A quite smallish loon. Swam very low in water, with head and bill pointed upward. Bill moderate in length, rather thin, with an angle on lower mandible, grayish in color. Forehead, crown, nape and back of neck gray, very fuzzily merings with white on throat and front of neck. A darker grayish area on the front of neck, with a bit of reddish-brown color immediately above and some grayish line below it (remnants of the breeding plumage). Back and wings gray, with numerous, small white spots. Head with a rather flat, sloping forehead, coming to a peak at the rear of the crown

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

None

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:
Moderate-sized lake in city park.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Common Loon-Much larger, with a longer, thick bill, not strongly gray, does not have tiny white spots on back and wings, different head shape(rather square), doesn't hold head and bill at an upward angle(altogether a different appearing bird).

Arctic Loon-Somewhat larger, holds bill straight out, not upward, not strongly gray (brown instead), lacks white spots of back and wings, different head shape(evenly rounded, not flat forehead and peaked crown), sharper separation of colors on head neck, stays in deeper water(the Arctic Loon that was on Sloan's Lake only a few days earlier remained out in the middle of the lake, whereas as the Red-throated seldom strayed more than a few hundred yards from shore-a feeding separation also noticeable on the coast).

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have seen Common Loons a number of times in Colorado, in both breeding and nonbreeding plumage. I have Arctic Loons in nonbreeding plumage on a number of occasions(5-6 birds) in Colorado, plus many in nonbreeding plumage on the California coast. I have seen Red-throated Loons in nonbreeding plumage on the California coast, but never before in Colorado.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?
Field guides verified observation.

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

PRINT NAME: Robert Andrews SIGNATURE: Robert Andrews DATE: 27 Oct 1976
Street Address: 1390 So Ivy Way Town and State: Denver, Colo 80221 ZIP: _____

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: RED-THROATED LOON

Gavia stellata

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 27, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 3:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.-MDT

Locality: Sloan's Lake

Nearest Town: Denver

County: Denver

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Van Remsen -	7160 West 9th Place, Lakewood, Colorado 80215	
John R. Cooper -	1041 Field Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215	

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Bright sunlight directly upon bird at times.

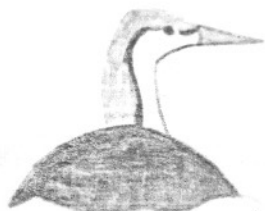
Distance from bird (how measured): Variable: 300 yards to 150 feet

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Breeding adult changing to winter plumage (about three-fourths complete)

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

First observed as it swam about 100 feet off of the boat dock on the north end of lake. Immediately began diving, moving very quickly away from observer to the far side (south-west corner) of the lake and directly into the sun. Bird was observed for about twenty minutes in this area with only the silhouette to study. Bird continued to dive and move about during this time. Ultimately, bird began to drift over to west side of lake near Sheridan Blvd. Observer moved over to west side of lake and was able to get to within 150 feet of bird as it began to preen. It rolled over on its side several times as preened. Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

An obvious loon and equally obvious a small loon with very slender bill. Head, small and rounded (not "squared" as in Common Loon). Bill, slender, pointed and slightly upturned at tip; gray in color. Forehead, top of head, back of neck, gray. Face and chin, white. Throat mostly white. However, there was still a rather marked smudge of rust (or reddish) present on the side of throat. Contrast between head and back of neck with face and throat not nearly as pronounced as in Arctic Loon (in winter plumage). Breast and belly, white (which glistened in sunlight as bird turned on its side to preen). Back, light gray with small white spots which were not easy to see unless the bird turned just right. If I had been closer to the bird this mark probably would have been more easily seen. However, to my best recollection at the time of viewing, the back of this bird was considerably lighter than that I have observed in winter plumaged Arctic Loons. Wings, gray and without a white patch (as in grebes). Sides (area just below wings as bird sat on water) also gray.



ARCTIC LOON (winter plumage), redrawn from sketch made in field 10-5-1976



RED-THROATED LOON (Sloan's Lake 10-27-76)

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

The bird was silent.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Small freash water lake in metropolitan area adjacent to busy thoroughfare.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Arctic Loon (non-breeding): About same size. Has relatively straight, slender bill which does not give upturned appearance. Has soft gray head in fall (birds I have seen here in Colorado through early December) usually edged in black along side of neck which gives an appearance of sharply lined point of demarcation between face and throat (white) and crown and side of neck (dark). Back, wings and tail much darker than crown and back of neck. Upon close examination, feathering on back will show pale edgings versus small white spotting of Red-throated Loon.

Common Loon (Non-breeding): Much larger. Much more massive bill which is straight. White in face extends well up beyond (over) eye; more diffusion between gray crown and back of neck with face and throat region. Head shape entirely different than either Red-throated Loon or Arctic Loon (is more "squared off").

Yellow-billed Loon (non-breeding): Has massive light, upturned bill; is large like Common Loon. Inland records in North America below northern Canada are extremely few and therefore this species would not be likely to be encountered in Colorado.

Grebes: All are much smaller and with the exception Pied-billed have white wing patches. Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen all four North American Loons (three in Colorado). Very familiar with Red-throated and Common Loons from the Atlantic Ocean off Long Island where both of these species winter in good numbers (can see as many as 100 per day with a little effort). Have seen many hundreds of Arctic Loons in winter off Seattle, Washington and the northern California coast. Seen Yellow-billed Loon once at Moss Landing, California. Also have seen all North American Grebes in good numbers. One previous record of Red-throated Loon for Colorado-December 15, 1973.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?
Standard Field Guides substantiated sighting.

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

PRINT NAME: Jack Reddall

SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: 11-10-1976

Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street

Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

☒ RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD☐ NEW STATE RECORD☒ ACCEPTED☐ REJECTED

1-76-106

P 12/15/76

Species: Red-throated LoonGravia stellata

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 27 Oct 1976Time Bird Seen: 1100 to 1230 and 1710 - 1745Locality: Sloan's LakeNearest Town: EdgewaterCounty: Denver

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

John R. Cooper

Patty Echelmayer

Steve Larson

Robert Andrews

Jack Reddall

Perry Hodge

Don Thatcher

Tom Gutz

Harold Snyder

Optical Equipment: 15 GC X telescope 10x50 binosIf photographed, type of equipment used: CT took 2 photos but at a distance and will be a blow-up at bestLight Conditions: clouded from low to center with sun at back at various timesDistance from bird (how measured): from 40 ft to 500 yds (at one time < 10 ft from shore)Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: partial breeding plumage

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: The bird spent most of its time diving and moved actively around the lake usually close to shore (Red-throated Loon is the loon most likely to be found close to shore). Once it got up and flew around the lake about 5 times with neck bent sharply downwards and head bent upwards at the neck.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

This was a small loon, smaller than the Arctic Loon a few days earlier, and smaller than a Western Grebe, it did not conspicuously differ from a Hairy Wooded Grebe. The bill was small, slim, and curved upwards at all times. The head was not smoothly rounded but was

feathered at the nape, the forehead sloped upwards to this bill.

The head and face were a uniform gray and this continued onto the nape and back to the back. The chin was also gray but the throat was a light blue-gray set off by a narrow line of blue.

There were some reddish-brown streaks on the throat and a narrow reddish-brown line on the forehead and back of the head.

The back and wings were primarily spotted with rows of pale dots which were visible only at close range or in good light. The bill was gray, darker than the gray of the head and neck.

This was some distance away from where this loon was the same bird as that I found on Oct 22 at the same place. The Arctic Loon on Oct 22-23 never turned its bill upwards; its overall body color was darker; the head was smoothly rounded; the nape had a silvery sheen in daylight; the dominations between the bill and the back were more uniform. The first

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Silent

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

large reservoir in suburban area

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Arctic Loon

1. bill is carried straight out or horizontal from head - not upwards
2. head is brown, not grey
3. usually has a sharp demarcation between pale throat and brown face just below eye
4. lower mandible is not as sharply upturned
5. back is uniform dark brown - never evenly spotted
6. overall body size is slightly larger
7. shape of throat patch is different
8. color of throat patch would never appear to be reddish brown

Common Loon

1. much much larger bird overall
2. bill - 3x longer and much longer
3. overall color is brown not grey
4. back is never speckled
5. bill is not carried at an upward angle
6. head is rather square - two peaks - not sloping with peak at the occiput

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have seen literally thousands of at 3 common loon species on the coast of Maine and have examined 50 specimens of each. The evenly spotted back is 100% diagnostic for Red-throated Loon. I have also seen 10 Commons and 2 Arctic in Colorado in my three months here.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

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

PRINT NAME: Van Remsen SIGNATURE: Van Remsen DATE: 27 Oct 1976
Street Address: 7160 W. 4th Place Town and State: Lafayette CO ZIP: 80215

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: RED-THROATED LOON

Gavia stellata

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): Oct. 27, 1976

Time Bird Seen: For more than 1 hour - about 0.5

Locality: Sloans Lake

Nearest Town: Denver

County: Denver

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Van Remmen

Others who came while we were there: Bob Andrews, Patty Echelmeier, Don and Hazel Thatcher

Optical Equipment: 7x35 Binoculars, 25x60 Spotting Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Good except for sun angle (Sun-Bird-Chamber angle 90° or more)

Distance from bird (how measured): 100 to 500 feet (estimated)

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Breeding (trace of winter characteristics)

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Bird swimming, diving and occasionally rolling over on its side in water to preen breast feathers. Not seen in flight when on surface. (1) bill almost always tilted upward above horizontal, and (2) bird ~~swam~~ generally very low in water (back almost awash, particularly toward rear). When diving, bird sank with no apparent motion, like a powerless submarine whose ballast tanks are opened.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern.

Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

Distinctly larger but less than twice as large as Horned Grebe that accompanied it for a time. Had long conical bill, relatively long body, and fairly long stout neck of loon. Bill more slender than Common Loon's and probably upturned (not sure of latter). Entire upper parts medium gray except for ill-defined lighter gray patches on each side of chin and tiny white spots on back (spots on back visible only in most favorable light). Throat also gray occasionally showing traces of buff or rufous. Gray of throat extends as streaks down sides of lower neck. Underside of lower neck, breast and belly snow white.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Silent

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: Open water.

Bird stayed near shore — unlike ~~the~~ other loons which seem to favor the center of lakes of this size.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated? Diving habit, size, fairly long neck and long slender conical bill eliminate all species except the larger grebes and other loons.

Western and Red-necked Grebes eliminated because they have longer thinner necks and white under the chin in all plumages. The light-gray chin patches on the Glossy Ibis bird probably indicates a first stage in transition to winter plumage.

Common and Arctic Loons eliminated because they have dark throats only in breeding plumage when they are boldly marked with black, white and gray, totally unlike the ~~black~~ nearly uniform gray of the Glossy Ibis bird. Furthermore they have a different posture, ^{and lack the} upturned bill and tiny white spots on back. The Common Loon's bill is much heavier.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: I have seen all species referred to herein along the California coast and, most of them at other places as well. Red-throated Loons in winter plumage have been seen about a dozen times in California, mostly in close association with "look-alike". This is my first experience with one in breeding plumage.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Field guides by Peterson and Robbins, Brunson and Zinn. Effect of this on documentation is believed to be minimal.

This report was written from notes made ^{less than 1 hour} ~~during~~ after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: JOHN R. COOPER SIGNATURE: John R. Cooper DATE: Dec 2, 1976
Street Address: 1041 Field St Town and State: Lakewood, Colo ZIP: 80214

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 1450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110