

Species: Red-throated Loon

(Vernacular Name)

Gavia stellata

A

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 18 November 1982

Time Bird Seen: about 12:45? to ~12:46?

Locality: Chatfield State Park Reservoir

Nearest Town: Denver

County: Douglas/Jefferson

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME
Robert Andrews

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1390 S. Ivy Way, Denver, CO

TELEPHONE
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Optical Equipment: Bushnell Spacemaster II Scope, 20x wide angle eyepiece

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: good usually; perpendicular to line between observer + bird.

Distance from bird (how measured): ~100 meters (guesstimate)

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Basic (=winter)

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Floating
Sitting in reservoir. No diving observed. No interactions with other species.

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 bird was never observed in direct proximity to any other loon.

Size: slightly smaller than the common loon seen on same day (5-10% smaller) in body size
 bill, head also smaller " " " "

Shape, bill: more petite than common loon (C.L.). The lower mandible showed a slight upturn at the gonys, the upper mandible along the culmen was straight.
head: essentially round both at anterior and posterior crown; it lacked the broad flat-topped look of ~~C.L.~~ and Yellow-billed Loons. Neck seemed much more slender relative to the Yellow-billed Loon. This is consistent with its smaller body size.

Plumage Overall coloration rather paler than Common L. ~~The eye was within the pale~~
~~whitish area of the face.~~ Yet not quite as pale as the Yellow-billed Loon. The color could best be described as pale gray-brown dorsally. Ventrally, it was off-white.

Color Pattern: Bill color not observed. Darker dorsal coloration did not extend down into face.

Eye was within pale ventral coloration. Bird lacked auricular spot of Yellow-billed Loon.

Back spots were present and definitely smaller than those of C.L. or Yellow-billed Loon.

Posture: This bird held its head at a slight upturned angle, perhaps 15° above horizontal.

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc: No vocalizations heard

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large artificial reservoir, presumably in deep water, far from shore

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

From Common Loon: smaller by 5-10%. Bill held pointed above horizontal. Lower mandible with upturned gonydeal angle. Head rounded. Eye within pale-colored area of face. Plumage paler

From Arctic Loon: Bill held above horizontal. Lower mandible with upturned gonydeal angle. Eye within pale-colored area of face. Plumage paler. Back spotting more evident than as it should appear on Arctic Loon.

From Yellow-billed Loon: much smaller (perhaps 25% smaller). Bill, head + neck much more petite. Head was rounded, not flat-topped. ~~Back~~ Back spotting smaller

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Yellow-billed Loon seen on the last 2 Denver CBC's at Chatfield, 3 birds in total. Arctic + Red-throated + C. L's seen in California and the latter two on numerous occasions in Colorado. I've examined numerous study skins of loons as well.

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

Roberson, Rare Birds of the West Coast

Godfrey, Birds of Canada

Lars Jonsson, Birds of Sea + Coast

R.S. Palmer, Handbook of N.A. Birds

"Identification of Yellow-billed Loon", Birding

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

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SIGNATURE: Mark Holmgren DATE: 20 Dec 1982

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