

RED-THROATED LOON

(Vernacular Name)

Gavia Stellata

(Scientific Name)

1. 93-100

ACCEPTED

DATE OF OBSERVATION	TIME OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN	SEX	PLUMAGE
11-11-1993	1615 TO 1617 MST	One	Unknown	Adult molting into Bas
11-16-1993	0830 TO 0900 MST	One	Unknown	Adult molting into Bas
	1300 TO 1305 MST			

LOCALITY: Cherry Creek Reservoir State ParkELEVATION: 5400' COUNTY: Arapahoe

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD (Names, Addresses, Telephone Number):

None that I am aware of.OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: 9.5x44 Celestron Binoculars; 15x-60x B/L Zoom TelescopeWEATHER CONDITIONS: Mostly cloudy; SE wind 10 MPH; 50° on 11/11; Clear S wind 5 MPH; 25°-45° on 11/16BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: Not a factor on 11/11 due to cloud cover; bright sun directly upon bird on 11/16DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 50-150 yards; estimated.

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: First observed swimming and occasionally diving about 150 yards from the "Prairie Loop Overlook" late in the afternoon on 11/11; Found again (most likely the same bird) swimming and diving about 100 yards off the swim beach on the morning of 11/16. Seen again early afternoon at much closer range (50 yards) from the spit of land at the Sail-Board concession building. Swam with much of its body very low in the water, giving a "snake-like" appearance not generally profited by other loons. Held its head about 10° from the horizontal as it swam about (moving very quickly at times). Did not see the bird fly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION (EMPHASIS ON KEY FIELD MARKS): Relative size and shape; plumage and color pattern of head, upperparts and underparts; shape and color of bill, wings, tail, feet and legs; eye color.

Forehead, crown and nape pale grayish-brown. Crown "rounded", not "squared" as in *G. immer* and *G. adamsii*. Face white with prominent dark eye. Sharply pointed, very thin, gray bill. Upper mandible mostly straight; lower mandible sharply upturned at the gonys. Overall, a rather pale bodied bird, with brownish but slightly darker back compared to the nape and crown. Breast white with grayish sides and flanks. There was still a red, triangular patch on the throat, but not nearly as large and prominent as evident in adults in alternate plumage. Wings long and pointed with dark primaries observed as bird prepared to dive.

HABITAT: Fresh-water reservoir on high plains adjacent to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

VOCALIZATION (call/song; how delivered-perched, in flight; frequency; duration):

None heard.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES: (basic plumage in all cases):

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*): Roughly the same size as *G. stellata*, but bill is thicker and straight. Winter plumaged birds have soft gray nape contrasting sharply with dark back. Blackish crown extends below eye. Foreneck white sharply margined with black. Overall body much darker than *G. stellata*. Is not as "snaky" appearing when swimming. Head and bill carried on the horizontal.

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) and YELLOW-BILLED LOON (*Gavia adamsii*): Both are considerably larger with much larger, heavier bills. Head profile "squared."

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

RED-THROATE LOON: Have seen perhaps 15 or more individuals in Colorado during past 30 years. Have seen "hundreds" off the east coast from Long Island, N.Y. in winter plumage. Seen off the Pacific coast from Washington to California. Also seen in breeding plumage during four trips to Alaska and one trip to Churchill, Manitoba.

PACIFIC LOON: Have seen 5-10 nearly every fall in Colorado in winter plumage since early 1970's. Have seen "hundreds" in winter from Washington to California. Seen in Alaska in breeding plumage and at Churchill, Manitoba.

COMMON LOON: Have seen in all plumages throughout North America during the past 55 years.

YELLOW-BILLED LOON: Have seen 6 individuals in Colorado, one in California, all in winter plumage.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

None Required.

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING X AFTER OBSERVATION; FROM MEMORY

NAME: JACK REDDALL

SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall

DATE: 11/18/93

4450 S. ARDEN ST., GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO

1-93-100



SKETCH FROM
FIELD NOTES.

Cherry Creek Reservoir
11-11 thru 11-16-1993

Gavia stellata