

Species: RED PHALAROPE

Phalaropus fulicarius

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): September 16, 1975

Time Bird Seen: about 4PM(for to abt. 5 minutes)

Locality: Barr Lake

Nearest Town: Brighton

County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Optical Equipment: 7 X 50 binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: overcast

Distance from bird (how measured): in the field, a minimum of 25 feet

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: male Plumage: Nonbreeding

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

The bird was first observed feeding alone in the shallows of a small pond. I looked at the bird closely and felt strongly that the bird was a Red Phalarope. At the same time Denver Zoo personnel were setting up nets at the pond to capture shorebirds. As the phalarope was the closest bird to the net, it was the first to be caught. Once in the hand, especially when compared with netted Northern, it was obvious it was a Red. The bird was taken back to the Zoo, but on Sept. 18 it drowned itself in a small water dish, and was placed in the Denver Museum of Natural History collection (#36147).

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:

Similar to Northern in size and shape but slightly larger and chunkier (distinction clear when the two species were held side by side in the hand). Forehead, front part of crown white, rear part of crown, nape, back of neck black. Auricular patch black. Remainder of face white. Back gray, with some scattered darker feathers. Wings black, primaries narrowly edged with brown, a white wing stripe. Rump black with white sides. Tail grayish. Throat, breast, sides, belly, flanks, undertail coverts white, with a pale reddish collar across the neck. Bill moderately long, thick especially toward the base, all black in color. Legs greenish-gray, with lobed toes.

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:

Shallow, muddy pool left by the receding level of Barr Lake, a moderately large irrigation reservoir on agricultural plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Wilson's Phalarope-has a thin, needle-like bill, is very pale gray throughout on the upperparts(no black of face, neck), has a white rump, no wing stripe.

Northern Phalarope-has a thin, needle-like bill, has a blackish(not gray)back with white back stripes, black legs, slightly smaller and thinner in build.

These points, particularly the bill, back and general appearance was very clear when the Red was held in the hand next to Northern's. I would have taken photographs of this but it was too dark at the time and I expected to do so later at the Zoo, not knowing the bird would soon kill itself.

Other shorebirds-have different patterns, have unlobed toes.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have considerable field experience with Northern and Wilson's Phalaropes, in both breeding and nonbreeding plumages, but none with Red.

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

The standard field guides were later consulted and they confirmed the identification.

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

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