

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

21-92-43

*accepted*

**Species:** Red Phalarope

**Date(s):** May 28, 1992

**Time seen:** 2:15-2:30 p.m.

**Locality:** Six miles N of Firstview, Cheyenne County

**Latilong:** 21

**Atlas Block # & Name:** 38102 H5, Landsman Hill

**Optical equipment** Binoculars and 25 power telescope. Photograph taken with 400 mm lens, but from such a distance that it's probably a spot on the slide.

**Number of birds seen:** One **Sex:** Male **Plumage:** Alternate

**Light conditions:** Excellent, light from behind me toward bird

**Distance from bird, how measured:** 100 yards, estimate

**Weather at time of observation:** Cloudy bright

**Prior weather & number of days since change:** May 26, heavy rain accompanied by heavy wind. May 27, cloudy but no wind and rain.

**Habitat:** Pond in middle of cropland and prairie. Apparently a temporary pond, with water some years, not in others. Between the road and its main, deeper part are a lot of dead plants (they are not water plants, and look like tumbleweeds).

**Behavior:** He fed actively with a flock of 25 Wilson's and 10 Red-necked Phalaropes. At one point all the phalaropes flew off to the deeper section of the pond, but they soon returned to the first location. He fed phalarope-style--picking insects off the water as he swam. He did not spin like a Wilson's, but did turn and circle rapidly.

**Detailed description of bird:** I first noticed a reddish bird with the phalaropes through my binoculars, and then trained the scope on the bird.

**Size:** slightly larger than Red-necked Phalaropes with it.

**Bill:** short, not needle-like. I could not distinguish the color.

**Plumage:** Rusty red breast and belly, with the extending onto the head except for a whitish patch from the eye to the back of the head. Dark crown. Grayish back, or at least the back was not rusty-colored.

**In flight:** strong wing stripe.

I call it a male because the rusty seemed not as bright as a female, and it lacked the strong black outline which makes the white face patch stand out more strongly.

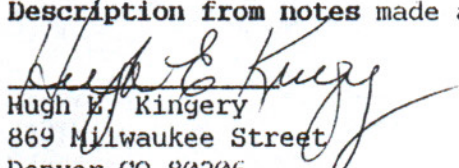
**Field marks not seen:** Color of bill; color of back; legs.

**Bird's calls or song:** No sounds heard.

**Similar species:** The other phalaropes don't have rusty neck, chest, and belly. Other rusty birds would be Red Knot (wrong shape, wrong behavior, too big), dowitchers (have longer bills, wrong feeding behavior); Buff-breasted Sandpiper (wrong behavior, buffy rather than rusty, no wing stripe); Curlew Sandpiper (wrong bill). None of these have white in the face.

**Prior experience:** A number in Alaska in breeding plumage, two in Colorado in basic.

**Description from notes** made at the time of observation.

  
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Shortish bill  
not needle-like  
Color?

Dark  
Rusky  
Red

Whitish  
pale



2 15 Free  
23

Slightly larger  
than R. H. H.  
Feeding style  
picking at weeds  
in water  
swamp

IN 2001

Strong wing snap

Tip to wing

Maybe 2 - in group