DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

21.92-43 accepted

Species: Red Phalarope

Date(s): Hay 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: Hale 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.

<u>Plumage</u>: 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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