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ACCEPTED

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
Sight Record Form

Species: Red Phalarope
Scientific Name: *Phalaropus fulicaria*

Date(s) of Occurrence: 22 October 1996

Number of Birds Seen: 1-2* I actually observed two different birds that were present on Duck Lake at the same time but I never saw them together so I thought there was only one bird. I learned that there were two birds from other observers that went there later.

Sex: Undetermined

Plumage: Adult winter

Location: Duck Lake in Larimer Co., CO. It is on the south side of 32 RD and west of 9RD. It is approximately 4 miles southeast of Fort Collins.

Elevation: approximately 5,000ft

Habitat: Duck Lake is a large, apparently natural body of water. It appears to be fairly shallow because in the summer it is probably 60% mossed-in. The substrate is probably clay but there are alkali patches in places along the shore. Cattails ring the southern portions of the lake (but there is generally a few feet of muddy shore between the cattails and water) while pasture surrounds the northern portion (mostly brome grass). A paved county road also runs along the north half. The terrain around the lake is hilly.

The bird(s) spent its time on the open water portions of the lake and I never saw it closer than 30 yards from shore. This is a good phalarope lake and I saw this phalarope further from shore than I generally see the Wilson's and red-necked phalaropes here.

Time of Observation: 1000 (10:00am)

Length of Observation: approximately 45 minutes

Other Observers Who Saw the Bird With Me: None

Observers Who Saw the Bird Independently:

Bill and Paula Lisowsky, 2919 Silverplume Drive, Ft. Collins, CO 80525 Tel (970) 225-6827
Joe Mammoser, work phone is (970) 221-6129 I don't know his current address

Light Conditions: It was a clear day and the sunlight was strong. The light conditions were not optimal when I first saw the bird in the middle of Duck Lake. I was on higher terrain looking at a downward angle towards the bird from the west. The bird was not directly in line with the sun but I was looking toward an area of glare on the water when I first viewed the bird. After about 10 minutes of viewing the bird it flew towards the north end of the lake so I drove to the north end of the lake to view from there. Here my position relative to the light and the bird was much better, due in part because the bird was much closer and I didn't have to look towards or across any glare on the water. The light was still bright which tended to "wash out" the bird at times. It took a good deal of persistence but as the bird moved around I was eventually able to determine what effects the light was having on my perception of the birds overall color and patterns.

Optical Equipment Used: Bushnell 15-45x spotting scope

Distance From the Bird: This varied from 50-200 yards (estimated).

Photography: No pictures were taken by myself or other observers as far as I know.

Describe the Birds Behavior: The bird was seen swimming and feeding on the open water. It frequently picked at the surface and turned quickly from side to side while swimming. The bird was alone and not with other species.

Description of the Bird: The bird was easily identified as a phalarope because of its swimming behavior. I first noticed this bird was very pale and had a distinct black smudge around the eye. The smudge was concentrated around the eye but didn't project downward in an elongated "drip" or "comma" on the side of the neck.

The mantle was grayish, lacking dark feather centers and bold white edgings. There were no white or rusty "slashes" in the scapulars. The underparts were white and there was not much of a contrast with the upperpart coloration.

The forehead was white but the crown and nape were dark. The bill was black and rather stout for a phalarope.

The bird appeared to be larger and heavier than a red-necked phalarope.

When the bird flew from the middle of the lake to the north end I could see a bold, broad white stripe across the base of the secondaries and extending onto the primaries in the outstretched wings.

Note- When I went from the west to the north end of the lake I apparently located the 2nd individual of this species on the lake rather than relocate the bird I initially saw. This caused some initial confusion because the extent of blackish feathering on the crown and nape varied between the two birds (the first one had less dark feathering on the nape). As I mentioned before my initial observation was of a bird in less than optimal light so when I changed positions (and birds!) I was wondering how the birds appearance changed so much (more dark feathering further downward on the nape). I never observed anything that suggested a species other than red phalarope but my impression sure changed between birds. The only mark I observed on the first bird and not on the second was the wing stripe when it flew. All other notes were made of the second bird when I had a closer vantage point and more favorable light conditions. Bill Lisowsky observed both birds together and noted the same differences (one individual had less blackish feathering on the nape and crown) and added that one bird looked slightly smaller and had a slightly shorter bill.

Elimination of Similar Species:

Sanderling- this is also a pale shorebird, but as I mentioned earlier the swimming behavior eliminated all but the phalaropes. The presence of a "phalarope mark" around the eye also eliminated sanderling.

Wilson's phalarope- The bill was substantially shorter and thicker than in a Wilson's phalarope. The "phalarope mark" was also blackish and not gray. It was concentrated around the eye and didn't project backward significantly. The white forehead on the observed bird is a mark not seen in Wilson's. When in flight, the bird showed a broad, white stripe across the base of the secondaries extending onto the primaries. Wilson's phalaropes do not show this mark and I feel this eliminates Wilson's also. Though somewhat subjective, the bird didn't act like a Wilson's phalarope. It was never seen on shore and it was usually over 100 yards from shore. The bird also just seemed different. The neck appeared shorter and thicker. Overall, the bird seemed more compact. I think the short bill added to this impression.

Red-necked phalarope - The bill was much thicker than in a red-necked phalarope. This bird also had a much paler mantle than a red-necked phalarope and lacked the white or pale "slashes" in the scapulars seen in winter red-necks. I feel these were the two strongest features that eliminated red-necked

phalarope. Also, I felt the bird was heavier-looking than a red-neck but since there were no red-necked to compare it with, this is subjective. The white stripe in the wing seemed broader and to reach further into the primaries than on a red-necked.

Prior Experience with this and Similar Species: I've seen lots of Wilson's and red-necked phalaropes in Colorado in the past. I spent lots of time comparing red and red-necked phalaropes at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, California in Jan. 1996. At the aquarium they have a pool set up with shorebird habitat that contains numerous captive shorebirds. They are easy to observe at a range of 3-10 feet here. I also saw lots of red phalaropes (200+) on a pelagic trip from Monterey Bay in Jan. 1996. I have lots of additional experience with shorebirds in the midwest, Texas, and Colorado.

References Consulted at the Time of Observation:

Field Guide to the Birds of North America. 2nd Edition. 1987. National Geographic Society.
Shorebirds: An Identification Guide. Hayman, P. , Marchant, J., and T. Prater

References Consulted After Observation:

Western Birds. Roger Tory Peterson

The Western Birdwatcher. Kevin J. Zimmer

Personal photographs taken of red and red-necked phalaropes at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Jan. 1996

This report was made from notes taken at the time of observation and was written into report formatted on October 2, 1997. It was typed on November 6, 1997.

David C. Ely

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

Accepted 7-0

NEW STATE RECORD

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UNUSUAL RECORD

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Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: **Red Phalarope**
(Vernacular Name)*Phalaropus fulicarius*
(Scientific Name)Date(s): **October 22, 1996**Number of birds seen: **2**

Sex:

Plumage: **Adult**Locality: **Duck Lake, Larimer County Road 32**Elevation: **4500'**Nearest town: **Ft Collins**County: **Larimer**Time(s) observed: **4:30 - 5:15 PM**Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): **45 min**Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers): **none**Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers): **David C. Ely (original ID); Joe Mammoser 2919 Worthington Ave, Ft Collins**Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light): **Sidelit and backlit until twilight; Heat waves were not a factor during observation.**Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): **10X binoculars; 80X Questar**Distance, and how measured: **40 yards; estimated**If photographed, type of equipment and film: **No photos**

Who else photographed the bird?

Describe the birds behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): **Actively feeding in both deep and shallow water; Moved actively from east side of pond to north side and then back to east again during observation. Did not see it fly nor come to shore. "Phalarope" swimming pattern observed though not spinning in place.**

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field:

Shorebird size, smaller than eared grebe; Phalarope shape and upright appearance as it swam. Birds differed in shape from each other; one was very fat and second bird was thinner bodied (less rotund);

Description (continued): Head was small compared to body. Back was very pale, warm grayish, and fairly uniform with no striping or "lines". There was no significant contrast between feather edges and feather centers on back. The bill was black, longish but definitely not "needle-like", (thicker than either Red Necked or Wilson's Phalaropes) and it was broadest at the base; Bird was stout even for a shorebird; The face was light and unstreaked except for the dark black "phalarope mark" from the eye back towards ear coverts. Rear of crown had darkish area, but when viewed headon, had a "receding hairline" appearance. Forecrown was white. Underparts were uniform, dull white with no apparent streaking of any kind. Legs were not observed.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):
None heard

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:
Open pond; There is a rich food supply in this late, evidence 2000+ birds present.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Red-necked Phalarope: This is most likely species to confuse with. Observed bird's stoutness was obvious on both birds (though they differed from each other), compared to the slender and smaller look of a RNP. Back was nearly uniform and grayish in color, and NO back streaking or feather contrasts present. Bill was longish but not needle-like and definitely broader at base. Forehead was balding and eye mark was dark.

Wilson's Phalarope: Dark cap, black "phalarope mark", shorter and broader based bill, and "stout" appearance eliminates this species.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

We have seen this and similar species listed above many times.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:
Kaufman's Advanced Birding, Shorebirds by Hayman, Marchant, Prater before observation.

a) at time of observation: **None**

b) after observation: **Western Peterson, National Geographic, Colorado Birds**

This report was written from reports made during after observation **XX** from memory

Date and time report was written: **October 31, 1996**

Reporting observer: **Bill and Paula Lisowsky**

Signature:



Address: **2919 Silverplume Drive Ft Collins, CO 80526**

SPECIES: RED PHALAROPE | PHALAROPUS FULICARIA
 (Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

DATE(S): 10-25-96 TIME OF OBSERVATION: 11:10 TO 12:05

EXACT LOCATION: DUCK LAKE

NEAREST TOWN: FT. COLLINS COUNTY: LARIMER

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:
DAVE ELY, BILL LISOWSKY, PAULA LISOWSKY

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: BAUSCH & LOMB CUSTOM BINOCULARS; SPACEMASTER SCOP

WEATHER CONDITIONS: MOSTLY CLOUDY BUT FAIRLY BRIGHT

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: NO SUN VISIBLE, BIRDS IN FRONT

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: APPROXIMATED AT 100 YDS

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 2 SEX: _____ PLUMAGE: WINTER

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: FEEDING ON SURFACE OF THE LAKE; THE BIRDS WOULD SWIM IN A ZIG-ZAG PATTERN AND BOB THEIR HEADS OCCASIONALLY UNDERWATER; THE NEVER SPUN LIKE THE OTHER TWO PHALAROPES DO; THE BIRDS WOULD ALSO BOB THEIR HEADS AS THEY SWAM SIMILAR IN ACTION TO A DOVE AS IT WALKS.

HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.): WHITISH FORENECK, DARK GRAY OR BLACK CROWN

EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): WHITE SUPERCILIUM WITH A BLACKISH EYE-LINE (PHALAROPE MARK) EXTENDING PREDOMINANTLY STRAIGHT BEHIND THE EYE

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): BILL DARK AND NOT NEEDLE-LIKE AS IN WILSONS AND RED-NECKED PHALAROPE

LEGS & FEET: COULD NOT SEE

UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): NAPE DARK AS ON CROWN; BACK MEDIUM GRAY WITH NO STREAKING; SMUDGY SHOULDERS EXTENDED TOWARDS BREAST; THE DARK NAPE COLOR EXTENDED DOWN THE REAR OF THE NECK TO THE BACK;

UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): ENTIRE UNDERPARTS WHITE; THE WHITE WRAPPED AROUND THE SIDES OF THE NECK SO THAT THE DARK COLOR ON THE REAR OF THE NECK APPEARED AS A THINNER LINE SIMILAR TO THE LOOK OF A WINTER-PLUMAGED HORNED GREBE; THE WHITE ON THE THROAT EXTENDED UP ONTO THE LOWER FAC.

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):
COULD NOT MAKE OUT

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): THE FOLDED WING SHOWED
BLACKISH PRIMARIES WITH GRAYISH COVERTS, SCAPULARS. THE EXTENDED
WING SHOWED WHITISH INNER AREA OF THE PRIMARIES AND WING LININGS
WITH DARK TIPS TO THE PRIMARIES FORMING A DARK TRAILING EDGE

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):
NONE

HABITAT: LAKE

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THE SMALLISH SIZE RULED OUT ANYTHING EXCEPT A SHOREBIRD, SMALL
GULL OR SMALL TERN; THE SWIMMING ACTION RULED OUT TERNS AND
THE OVERALL SHAPE RULED OUT GULLS AND TERNS TOGETHER. THE
SWIMMING AND FEEDING ACTIONS RULED OUT ALL SHOREBIRDS EXCEPT
THE PHALAROPES. THE SHORTER, STOUTER BILL RULED OUT WILSON'S
PHALAROPE, THE UNIFORM GRAY BACK WITH NO SPARKS, THE WHITE
PRIMARIES UNDERNEATH RULED OUT RED-NECKED. THE BIRDS ALSO
APPEARED LARGER THAN WHAT I RECOLLECT OF RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

I HAVE SEEN ONLY ONE OTHER WINTER-PLUMAGED RED
PHALAROPE. THESE BIRDS LOOKED VERY SIMILAR TO IT AND SWAM
IN A SIMILAR PATTERN. I HAVE SEEN DOZENS OF RED-NECKED
PHALAROPES AND THEY APPEAR VERY SMALL TO ME. THESE BIRDS
APPEARED LARGER. I HAVE SEEN HUNDREDS OF WILSON'S PHALAROPES.
THESE BIRDS WERE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE, BUT THE
BILL WAS SHORTER AND NOT NEEDLE-LIKE AND THE COLOR OF
THE UPPERPARTS WERE UNIFORMLY MEDIUM GRAY, NOT LIKE THE
BROWNISH-GRAY OF WILSON'S.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC "FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA";
"SHOREBIRDS" BY HAYMAN, MARCHANT AND PRATER
"SEA BIRDS" BY HARRISON

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

NAME: JOE MAMMOSEX SIGNATURE: Joe Mammosex DATE: 10-28-96