

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

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

A

2004-87

CBRC FILE #:		
RESULTS:		
Species: Red Phalarope	Scientific Name: <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	
Date(s) of occurrence: October 18, 2003		
Number of birds seen: 1	Sex: ?	Plumage: adult basic
Exact location: Elevenmile Reservoir, near NW end		
County: Park	Nearest town: Lake George	Elevation: approx. 8600 feet
Length of observation: 2 hours	Time(s) of observation: approx. 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Andrew Spencer		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Brandon Percival, BB Hahn (the following day)		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: Direct sun, approx. 90 degrees to the right of us as we faced the bird		
Optical equipment used: Nikon Fieldscope ED with 20-45x zoom eyepiece		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): 125 yards		
Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? yes	If so, are you submitting photos? yes	
Who took the photograph(s)? Andrew Spencer		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: out in the middle of the lake		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: The bird was feeding like a typical phalarope, swimming around on the water, picking things off the surface.		
<p>DESCRIPTION – The bird was easily recognizable as a phalarope. It was small compared to the nearby birds on the water (Eared Grebes, American Coots, dabbling ducks). Structurally, it was vaguely reminiscent of a Sabine's Gull, with an upright posture and a longish neck. The bill was slightly shorter than the width of the head and entirely black. In our judgment, based on our previous experience with the birds, we felt that the bill was too thick for Red-necked Phalarope and well within the range of Red Phalarope. It seemed rather blunt at the tip. The head of the bird was rather blocky, with a bulge on the forehead leading steeply down to the base of the bill.</p> <p>In plumage the bird was mostly white. It had a black earpatch. Its upperparts were pale gray—in our judgment similar in shade to Herring Gull or Ring-billed Gull. The gray was completely uniform across the back and across all visible wing feathers, without any back stripes or contrasting feather edges. There was a similarly colored gray smudge on the anterior part of the flanks, and a row of gray “scallop” posterior of it, along the flanks below the wings. A very thin stripe of gray connected the back with the nape of the bird. This stripe branched into a blackish Y on the rear of the crown; the branches of the Y extended forward along the sides of the crown above the earpatch approximately as far as the eye. The white of the crown was visible when the bird was facing directly away. The black of the rear crown was not visible from the front of the bird.</p>		
Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: the bird was silent.		
SIMILAR SPECIES – Wilson's Phalarope was eliminated by the distinct dark ear patch and the short bill. Red-necked Phalarope is quite similar, but was eliminated by the thickness of the bill and the lack of striping or any kind of marking on the back. We both also felt, based on our experience with the birds, that the blocky head shape and amount of white on the forehead were very good for Red Phalarope and not for Red-necked Phalarope.		
What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? While working as a seabird spotter for The Bird Guide out of Newport, Oregon, I saw numerous Red Phalaropes across several pelagic trips. However, these birds were nearly always seen at a considerable distance. In the year preceding this observation I had closeup views of the species three times: in September 2002 at Barr Lake (basic plumage), in March 2003 from a fishing boat off Puerto Angel, Oaxaca, Mexico (basic plumage), and May 2003 at the sewage ponds in Blanding, UT (halfway into alternate; see Utah's bird record committee website, where the accepted record is posted along with a photograph). I see many Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes during the normal course of a birding year.		
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): Andrew and I consulted Sibley during our observations of the bird, which helped us identify it.		
This report was made from (check one) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> notes made during observation <input type="checkbox"/> notes made after observation <input type="checkbox"/> later from memory.		
Date and time of written report: Started October 2003; “Similar species” and “Prior experience” categories finished May 5, 2004		
Reporting observer: Nathan Pieplow	Signature:	
Reporting observer's address: 4745-B White Rock Circle		
City: Boulder	State: CO	Zip: 80301