

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Tricolored Heron

Scientific Name: Egretta tricolorDate: Wed. June 15, 1988 Time: 12:30 pm, 2:15 pm Length of time observed: 15 min., 15 min. total
Thur June 16, 1988 9:15 am, 2:15 pm 15 min., 15 min. 1 hour

Number: one Age: adult Sex: unknown

Location: 1200 west 9000 south (Utah County) pond located west of Salem, Utah.

Lat/long: Salt Lake City, Provo #6

Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: closest 20 ft. farthest 150 ft Light conditions: clear

Optical equipment: Bausch and Lomb Discoverer Spotting Scope
10x50 Bushnell binoculars

Weather: clear, bright. 90 degrees

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The bird was first observed at 30 feet, feeding with white-faced ibis and snowy egrets. It is a dark slender wading bird with a white belly and front of neck. It is observed flying with its neck bent in an S shape of herons and egrets. It has a long slender neck and a long straight bill that darkens towards the tip. It has red eyes. It has long legs that it uses for wading in the pond as it feeds. Its size is larger than the egrets and ibis it is feeding with, but smaller than the Great Blue Heron nearby.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: none heard

Behavior: On all four occasions the heron was observed at the edge of the pond. When first observed, it always sought cover away from the observer. The bird would lower its head and walk quietly into the sage brush along the south edge of the pond. The bird walked away from me along the shore until a safe distance away and then emerged from the sage brush to feed in the pond. I never saw the bird fly from the pond during my observations.

Habitat: The pond is 150 feet in diameter with its west edge on 1200 west. The west edge contains cattails and is the marshiest portion of the pond as it is the entrance of the irrigation overflow that feeds into the pond. The south edge is lined with sage brush and slopes down to the vegetated edge. A small alkali flat exists at the south east end. The east and north edges are steep, rising 3 feet above the normal pond level. Maximum depth is 5 feet.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:
Other dark long-legged long-necked wading birds in the area are Great Blue Heron and White-faced Ibis. Both of these birds were seen either feeding with the heron or soon after. The Tricolored Heron's size and straight bill and white belly and throat ~~contrasted~~ eliminated the ibis. The darkness of the bird contrasting with the white belly and throat as well as size eliminated the Great Blue Heron.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: I have observed local birds for the past 12 years, and feel confident with all long-legged wading birds such as those described previously.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
NGS Birds of North America, Golden Press Birds of North America, Merrill Webb. All these confirmed notes taken in the field of the Tricolored Heron identification.

Significance of record in this area or the state: Very significant observation as this is the third observation in the state.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)
none

Description from notes taken at time of sighting X notes made later from memory

Observer: Harold Clayson

Signature: *Harold Clayson*

Address: PO Box 410
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Other observers who independently identified this bird: Merrill Webb

Date prepared: June 26, 1988

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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