

1979-01

DOCUMENTATION --
RARE BIRD SIGHTING

MOUNTAIN WEST REGION
AMERICAN BIR

Species: Little Blue Heron
(Vernacular name)

Florida caerulea
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 25 Aug. 1979 Time Bird Seen: 10:40 AM to 11:30 A

Locality: Farlington Bay Waterfowl Management Area
Farlington, Davis Co, Utah
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 7x35 binoculars and 20x spotting scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 2 Sex: unknown Plumage: immature

Light conditions: full sunlight, birds were observed at several angles

Distance from bird, and how measured: 100 to 200 feet estimated.

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Birds were observed walking and feeding in shallow drainage canals. The birds usually remained solitary, but were seen once with a small flock of snowy egrets (~10 birds).

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Drainage canals were adjacent to Great Salt Lake into which they flowed. Exposed mudflats were adjacent to the canals.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address)
Verla Jean Hedges, 889 S. Cedar Knolls W., Cedar City, Ut. 84720

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage, and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

The birds stood about 2 feet tall and were slender bodied with long legs and neck. Plumage was white. The bill was about 3 inches, slender, and straight, and was light gray in color. The legs were long and slender and gray-green in color. The tail was short and slightly-rounded, extending to the end of the wings. The birds walked in a nearly upright position.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

not heard

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Snowy Egret - this species has a black bill and black legs with yellow feet and is slightly smaller in size than Little Blue Heron. Both species were observed together in the field.

Cattle Egret - this species has a yellow bill and yellow legs and a shorter, stockier neck.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have observed numerous Little Blue Herons on the Texas Gulf Coast and have seen this species once previously in Utah (Farmington Bay - 6 Sep. 1976). I am very familiar with all other white North American egrets and herons.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

NAME (print): Steven P. Hedges

Mailing address: 889 S. Cedar Knolls W., Cedar City, Ut. 84720

Signature: Steven P. Hedges

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206