

accepted

4 - 1985

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Great Egret

Scientific Name: Casmerodius albus

Date: Apr. 9, 1985 Time: 5:50 - 6:20 pm Length of time observed: 30 min.

Number: 3

Age: 1 breeding,
2 non-breeding Sex:

Location: West pond, Grafton sewage plant, Wash. Co., Utah.

Latilong: 19

Elevation (if known): 3950 ft.

Distance to bird: 50 yards

Light conditions: Bright sun; birds lighted
from all angles as I
circled them.

Optical equipment: 6x 18 binoculars,
20 - 60 X spotting scope.

Weather: Clear; scattered clouds to the north; warm.

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

Large, white birds, with long, yellow bills and black legs. Plumage entirely white; the largest bird with plumes extending over the tail and drooping into the water. Heads were long rather than rounded, but the bills exceeded the heads in length. Legs were glossy black, with black feet. Even the smaller birds were more than twice the body length of the American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts that fed around them. The long necks were carried in an "S" curve that showed the shape even when the birds were sitting in a hunched position.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: None

Behavior: Birds were standing in a hunched position.. They moved around nervously as I drove around them.

Habitat: Empty sewage pond with small puddles of rain water.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated: Both Snowy and Cattle Egrets are much smaller, closer to the size of the Avocets. These birds were nearly as large as Great Blue Herons. Snowy Egret has a black bill. Cattle Egret has a more rounded head, with the bill shorter than the head depth.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: I have seen and photographed this species in the San Francisco area. Snowy Egrets are common migrants here.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Col Golden and Peterson's field guides used to verify identification at the site.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

Fourth record in the Zion area.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting _____ notes made later _____ from memory x

Observer: Jerome L. Gifford
Box 85

Signature: *Jerome L. Gifford*

Address: Springdale, Utah 84767

Other observers who independently identified this bird: None

Date prepared: 4/9/85

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120