

NOTE TO VBRC: THE OBSERVER WISHES TO WITHHOLD THE EXACT LOCATION OF THIS REPORT FROM PUBLIC. DO NOT RELEASE EXACT LOCATION. –KP McFarland

**RARE SPECIES DOCUMENTATION
Records of Vermont Birds**

The following form has been prepared to encourage full documentation, when requested, of rare or unseasonal birds in the state of Vermont. These reports are put into a permanent file and should be as detailed as possible. New reports are reviewed annually by the Vermont Bird Records Committee, which evaluates records for their acceptability to future researchers and for inclusion in the state bird list.

Please print or type

SPECIES: American White Pelican

NUMBER OBSERVED: 1

OBSERVER MAKING REPORT: OTHER OBSERVERS (and addresses if available)

Miranda Hunt
1384 So. Walden Rd.
Cabot, VT 05647

LOCATION: (place, township, county) Hardwick Lake, Hardwick, Vermont/Orleans County

DATE: 7/9/2016

TIME AND LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 1:43pm/20 min.

DISTANCES FROM BIRD: Maximum 400 yards Minimum 300 yards (I think but am bad with distance estimation-it was across the lake from me)

WEATHER:

wind direction not sure wind speed not sure, stormy and very rainy 10-20mph

sky cover Very cloudy, heavy rain and thunderstorm light in relation to observer's position
temperature 66 degrees

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: (make, power, etc.)

Canon 100-400mm L series lens mounted on a Canon T3i camera body

OBSERVER'S PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH THIS SPECIES OR SIMILAR FORMS:

I did not even know what I was looking at! I thought it was an egret but do not know my shore birds so it took some investigating to figure it out. I am worried about it's location being made public so have not told people where I found it.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION: Photo yes, many Tape Recording Specimen

If yes to the above, where is this information deposited? I have the photos on my personal external hard

drive. _____

HABITAT: (be as detailed as possible, include associated bird species)

I bird often before work, or on my lunch break at Hardwick Lake. It is a long narrow lake with marshy area at it's northern and southern ends. It deposits into the Lamoille River at it's southern end where it is very reedy and marshy. I watch many ducks, loons, osprey and eagles there. There are very few houses near it but route 14 runs by the lake shore on it's western side for a bit. I do not see people swim or boating often so it is semi secluded in that manner.

BIRD'S BEHAVIOR: (feeding actions, manner of flight, displays or interactions, reaction to observer)

The bird was along the opposite shore as I, and was feeding I believe. It would plunge it's head into the water in a very methodic fashion coming up often and swallowing it's catch. It moved slowly towards the northern end of the lake repeating this behavior while moving. It wasn't bothered by me, I do not think, as it was far away and I was in my car protecting myself and camera from the rain. There was a bald eagle hiding in the tree close by waiting out the rainstorm but it also seemed unbothered by it's presence.

VOCALIZATION: (song or calls)

None that I could hear.

DESCRIPTION: (Describe what you actually saw during the observation. We hope that observers will take field notes during the observation and before consulting field guides, etc. Additional pages with sketches and copies of field notes are encouraged.)

I saw a bird that I believed at the time to be an egret, as I had seen one there before. It was odd though because I noticed it's beak was much thicker and throat more bloated with swallowing action. I also noticed the top of the legs that were visible above the water were very orange, unlike an egret. It was a large white bird, the size of an egret/heron and very much the same shape as them as well. Even though it was dark and stormy and I knew I couldn't get great quality photos I took a bunch for indentifying purposes.

Relative size and shape:

Much the same in size and shape as a great blue heron, or egret.

Head (crown, cheeks, eye, throat, nape):

White head with white frilly tufts on top, white cheeks, yellow/orange ring around the eye, large yellow/orange throat, white nape I believe.

Feet and Bill (shape, color, length):

I could not see it's feet as they were under water but it's legs appeared to be orange/yellow, bill was long and orange with a yellowish wide chin/throat that extended and stretched with swallowing motion.

Upper back:

white

Lower back and rump:

What was visible was white

Wings (shape, length, markings):

What was visible was white

Breast, belly, flanks, undertail coverts:
Bird was wading and the above not visible.

Tail (shape, length, markings):
All white, frilly, not distinct tail.

IMPORTANT: WHAT SIMILAR SPECIES WERE ELIMINATED WHEN MAKING THIS IDENTIFICATION AND HOW WAS THIS BIRD DIFFERENT?

At the time I thought it was an egret, I took photos and later identified it to be an American White Pelican. It had a larger, thicker beak that extended when swallowing its food. The beak made me think at the time it was not an egret. It also had what appeared to be orange/yellow legs (what was visible above the water) which I believed egrets to be black or dark. I do not know my shore birds so it took some investigating!

COMMENTS: (was age or sex determined?, etc.)

No

I have photos if you'd like a copy that have date and time with the metadata.

miranda@buffalomountaincoop.org to request the photos.

This report was written from notes taken during _____ immediately after ___yes___ the observation, or written from memory _____ (please attach copies of notes if available)

NAME (print) Miranda Hunt _____ SIGNATURE (not req'd) _____

MAILING ADDRESS PO Box 272, Cabot, VT
05647 _____

DATE 7-12-2016 _____

Return electronically (preferred) to: vbrc@vtcostudies.org or mail to: Vermont Bird Records Committee, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT 05055

See photos below

