

APPENDIX II

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: Scott's Oriole; Icterus parisorum
(Vernacular name) (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.

Dates (s): 18, 19 May 1977 Time Bird Seen: 0:900 to 13:00

Locality: T. 2N., R. 102W., Sec. 10 SENE; T. 3N., R. 102W., Sec. 34 NESW

Rangely Rio Blanco County Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell Broadfield 10x50 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: —

Number of birds seen: 2 Sex: ♂ Age: Full breeding

Light conditions: excellent - bright sun - cloudless sky

Distance from bird, and how measured: 1st sitting - 20 yds.; 2nd sitting - 30 yds. optical estimate

Describe the bird's overall behavior: both birds (♂) were rather "nervous" and although I could get rather close (20 yds), they would soon fly 10-20 yds. further away. One bird stayed around scattered juniper and flew to different trees as I approached it. It gave its characteristic song several times from atop junipers. The other bird was observed around a ~~large~~ juniper stand atop rocky gulch cliffs. I located it by its song which it frequently gave. It was also difficult to approach, as it frequently flew from trees to rocky cliffs, etc. Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Semi-arid cold desert plant associations. Habitat was dominated by junipers with "edge effect" comprised of a big sagebrush-shadecale-Gardner saltbush type, a pinyon-juniper type, and ridges and cliffs dissecting both. The bird spent most of the time in the juniper type and around its edges.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Mike Wetman wildlife biologist BLM P.O. Box 928 Montez, Co. 81401

Sitting in same habitat type about 10 miles away - but was not a positive identification.

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.

_____ = key characters

Size: about 7", similar to other Icterids

Shape: long & slender, accentuated by long pointed beak and long tail

Plumage: adult ♂ breeding; yellow parts were bright lime yellow including shoulder & base of outer retrices; black chest, neck, head, nape & back, black wing except white wing bar, blk tail except yellow base of outer retrices

Bill: long, straight, pointed & shiny black

Wing: black primaries & secondaries; black coverts except lime yellow shoulder patch & 1 thin white wing bar

Tail: All black except lime yellow base (3/4 of length) of outer tail feathers. Yellow was more visible when in flight or spreading it.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: The birds sang regularly except while I was approaching them. One was observed in the morning & the other in mid afternoon; however both were singing regularly. Both typically sang from perches, either on junipers or large rocks. The song rather closely resembled a w. Meadowlark but the song ended on a higher note. The quality of the notes was rich, melodic and very musical. The song was rather loud, fluid, sweet, pleasing to the ear and carried very well.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: The only similar species within "reasonable" range is the Northern "Bullock's" Oriole, from which it was immediately differentiated by the bright lime yellow color and ~~not~~ black neck, head, back pattern. In comparison with the Northern "Baltimore" Oriole, lime yellow color difference was evident and showed more black on chest but had a similar head and back pattern. Tail pattern was obviously different also. No ♀ orioles within the region came close to the obvious bright lime yellow color. The birds were obviously not Black-headed or Hooded Orioles or any other oriole found in similar habitat due to characteristics and differences listed above. Pinyon-juniper habitat excluded Northern Orioles which are more common in riparian habitat. Prior experience with this and similar species: The only other oriole I am familiar with is the "Bullock's" Oriole (Northern), which I have only observed in various riparian habitat types. This was my first experience with Scott's Oriole. I had many good looks at the two birds under excellent light conditions and am positive that they were Scott's Orioles.

This report was written from notes made during ☒ after _____ observation;
from memory ☒.

Name (print) : Peter C. Sorensen (Range Conservationist & Wildlife Biologist)
Mailing address: P.O. Box 611 Meeker, CO 81641 BLM-Meck

Signature: *Peter C. Sorensen*

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205