

2003-76

CFO-RC FILE #: _____ RESULTS: _____ OBSERVER: Coen
Dexter

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

Species: Ruby-throated Hummingbird. *Archilochus colubris*.

(Common Name)

(Scientific Name)

Date(s) of observation: **27-28 September 2003.** Number of birds seen: **one.**

Sex: **male.** Plumage: **Sub-adult similar to Ruby-throat pictured by Sibley.**

Exact location: **At a feeder 10 feet and north of the house.**

County: **Montrose.** Nearby town: **Nucla.** Elevation: **5849 feet.**

Length of observation: **15-20 minutes.** Times(s) of observation: **6:30 PM until 7:00 PM on the 27th and again from 7:15 AM until 9:00 AM on the 28.**

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: **Brenda Wright.**

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): **None.**

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird's position): **All directions but I moved so as to keep myself between the sun and the feeder.**

Optical equipment used: **10 by 42 and 8 by 32 Swarovski binocs.**

Distance from bird(s)? **10 feet and at the near focus of both binocs.**

Was bird photographed? **Yes.** Are photos submitted? **Yes.**

Who took the photographs? **Brenda Wright.**

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: **The hummingbird feeder is hanging in a large elm tree. We have several flowering shrubs and plants in our yard. So do our neighbors. The bird would visit these flowers.**

Describe the bird's behavior (flying; feeding; habits; behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification): **When on the feeder the bird would perch. Most of my observations were at the feeder. The hummer did control the feeder. He would perch in the elm and drive off the Black-chins.**

Describe the bird(s) in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include overall size and shape, and how you placed the bird(s) in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings, and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Describe other details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. **Two field marks drew my attention immediately to the bird. The bird was at the feeder and the evening sun caught the throat to reflect a red-orange color. The color was restricted to a line running along the base of the throat. Several red-orange spots could be seen in good light though out the remainder of the throat. The back was an iridescent green, much brighter than the other hummers at the feeder. The bill was straight and short, straighter and shorter than the female Black-chins. The post ocular spot was very bold.**

Upon close examination of the pictures, while the bird is perched on the feeder, a length can be determined. I measured the feeder and the bird's length is between three and three and one-half inches long. The tail was about three eighths of an inch longer than the wings when perched. The tail was slightly forked which could be seen when the bird was perched. Some tiny white edges on the end of the tail feathers were present. The tail had no red, only dark brown. The chest and belly were light gray with a few darker blotches. The sides under the wing were darker gray with a light green cast. The flanks lack any peach or reddish coloration. The bird had a very light gray collar that was quite noticeable. From the back, the collar could be seen wrapping around except for the nape. In the pictures the wings are saber like and not clubbed as Sibley show. I did not note this at the time of the observations but it clearly shows in the pictures.

Describe bird's call: **While observing the bird in the morning it gave its call note many times in trying to defend the feeder against the Black-chins. It sounded very similar to the Black-chins and maybe slightly higher in pitch.**

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **First of all the fiery red throat eliminates our common Black-chinned Hummingbird. The common Rufous Hummingbird has extensive red in the tail and flanks. Our common Broad-tailed Hummingbird has some red in the tail and always pink-peach on the sides and flank. The Calliope Hummingbird has a tail that is shorter than its wings and some peach on the flanks. After listening to these four species of hummingbirds for 20 years, I am certain that this hummingbird was not Calliope, Broad-tailed, or Rufous. The call notes were like a Black-chinned Hummingbird and very different than our other common hummingbirds. Anna's Hummingbird is 4 inches, has different call notes, rose gorget, and flatter forehead.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **I know North American hummingbirds very well including Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I also know nearly all hummingbirds of Mexico. I have spent the last two winters in Mexico and have made many other trips south.**

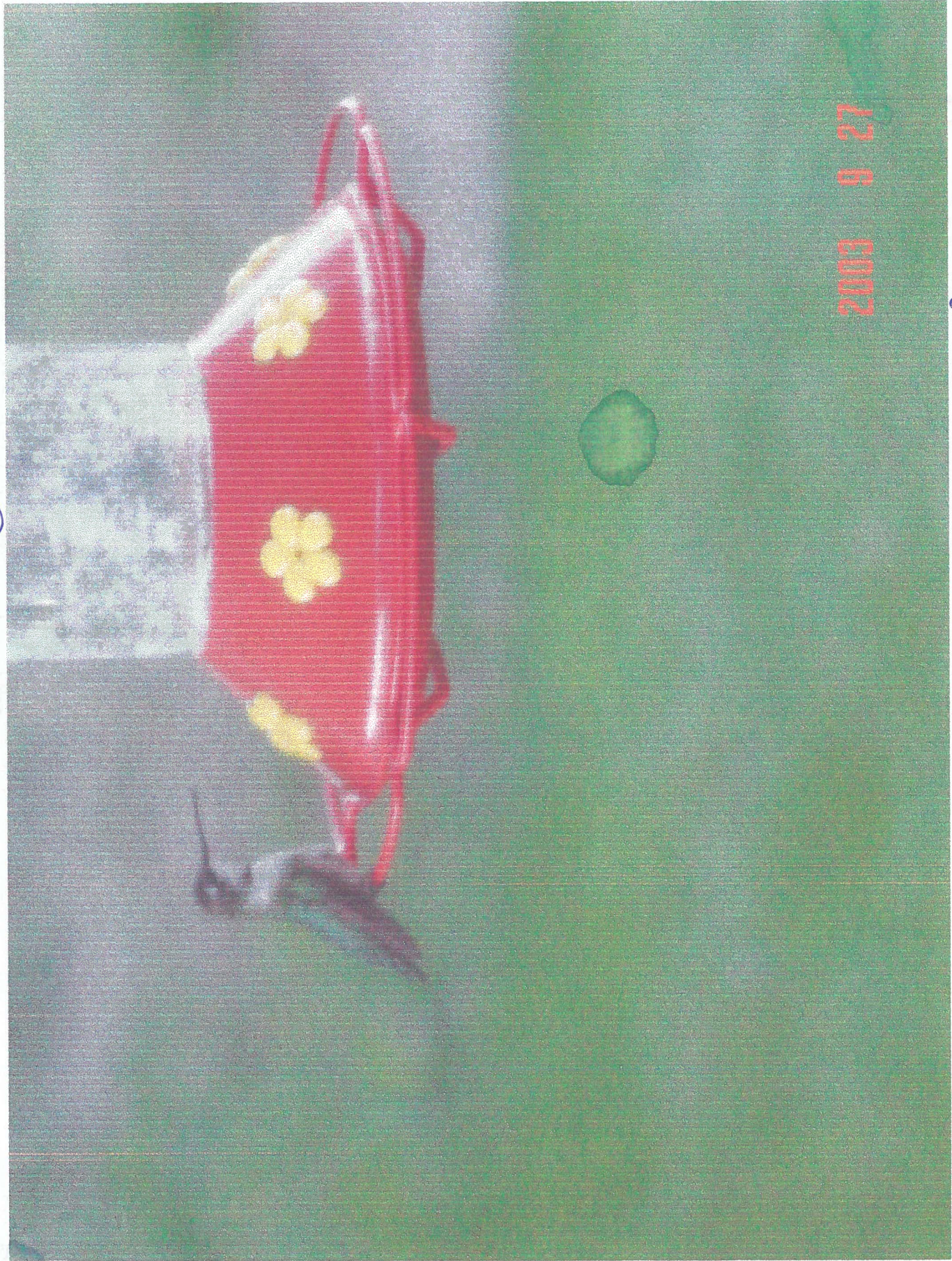
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification: **I used all available books. I became interested in juvenile males and tail spots. I have not yet found any guides that address juvenile male tails.**

This report was made from notes made during **X** and after **X** observation **as well as from the pictures Brenda took.** Date of written report: **3 October 2003.**

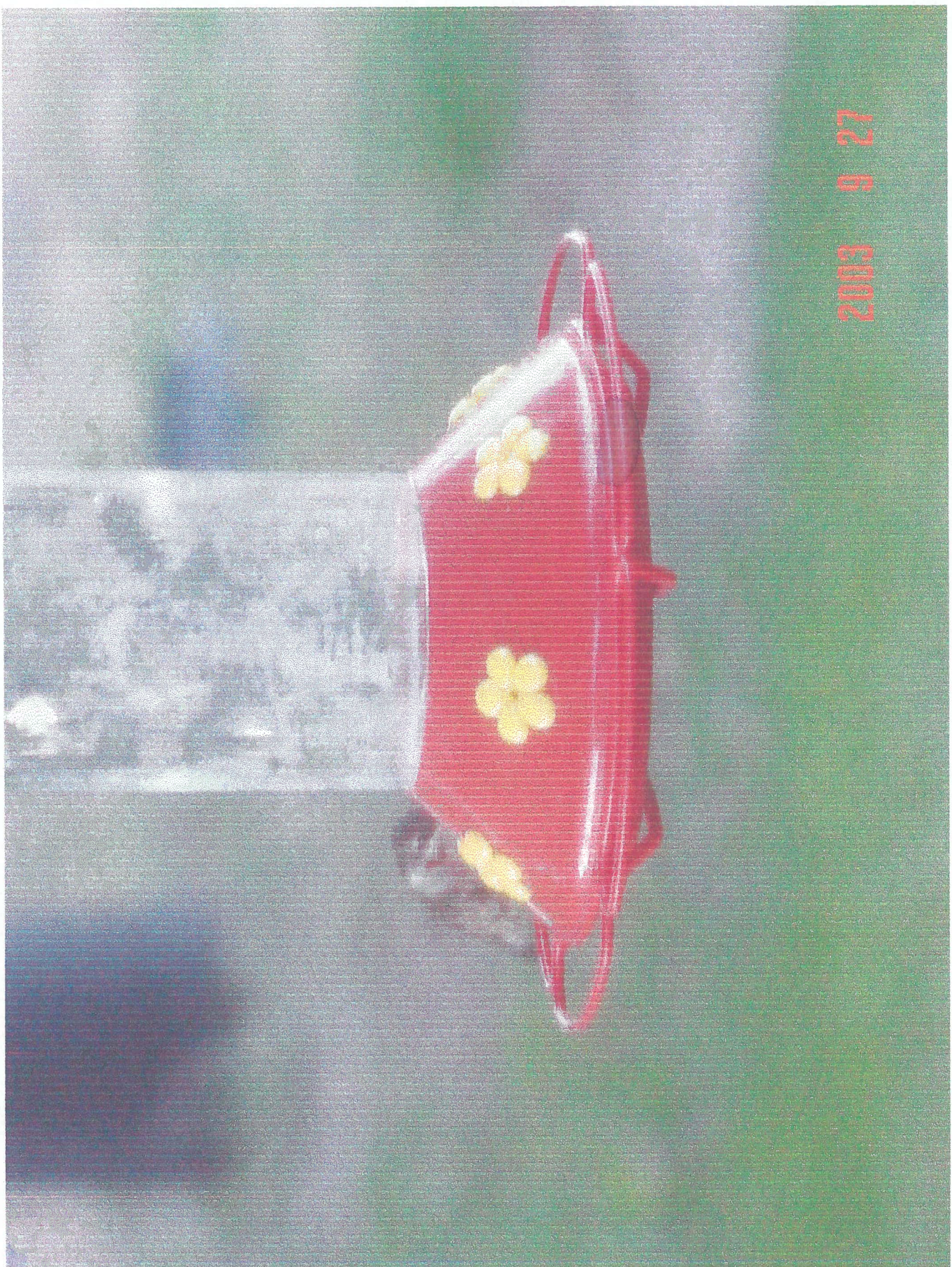
Signature: **Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright**

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Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Nucla, CO 27-28 Sep 03



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