

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

55-93-66
A

HEPATIC TANAGER

Piranga flava

Location: City Park; Pueblo; Pueblo County, Colorado

Date: May 15, 1993

Setting:

Van Truan, Brandon Percival and I were birding at about 8:00 a.m. in Pueblo City Park prior to the start of an Arkansas Valley Audubon Society birding fieldtrip there later in the morning. We heard this bird singing from somewhere ahead of us, apparently from high in the trees in an open area in the northwest sector of the park. Van called out the possibility that it might be a Hepatic Tanager from the song. He was right. The bird perched in the open in the very top of a large cottonwood, about 40 feet high. It sang constantly for about 20 minutes from its perch on a dead twig projecting above the green crown of the tree. After 20 minutes it flew away and sporadically sang from within the foliage of several other deciduous and pine trees until we lost track of it. An additional 5-10 people who were assembling for the fieldtrip saw the bird. We observed it with binoculars as it sang.

Description:

The bird was a male in breeding plumage. It was a medium-sized all reddish bird, about 7" long, smaller than a robin and larger than a House Finch. The overall color was a dull brick red. This color varied by being irregularly greyer on the flanks. The back and wings were dusky red. There were no wingbars or other markings. There was a dull brown cheek patch that extended up to the eye. The bill was heavy and dark grey. Although the color of this bird was not a brilliant red, it was very beautiful and rather bright as it sat up in the direct sun as it sang.

Similar Species:

The all red, crestless appearance rules out all other species but Summer Tanager. Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal and Vermilion Flycatcher have some contrasting black or dark color and/or a crest. The Summer Tanager differs in being brighter red, having red, not grey, flanks and lacking the grey face patch.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Hepatic Tanagers in SE Colorado on several other occasions and have experience with other north American "redbirds".

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.



Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

Colorado Field Ornithologists - Sight Record Form

- New State Record - X - Rare bird in CO

Hepatic Tanager
(Species)

Piranga flava
(Scientific name)

Date(s):

May 15, 1993 7:50- 8:00 AM 10 minutes

Locality:

Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, Colorado.
Nearest town, county and state)

Optical equipment:

10X40 Bausch&Lomb Custom Binoculars.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:
Not photographed.

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: male Plumage: adult

Light Conditions:

excellent

Distance from bird and how measured:

30 feet on top of cottonwood tree.

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The bird sang on top of a cottonwood tree.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Cottonwood trees in a city Park

Other observers who independently identified the bird
(Please list names and address):

Van Truan 812 West 14th Street Pueblo CO 81003

Mark Janos 10 Sedum Court Pueblo CO 81001

Mike & Rhonda Ketchen 4506 Ridge Dr. Pueblo CO 81008

John Riffe Pueblo CO later the same day

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. The field
marks used to identify the bird. Include Size, overall
shape, plumage, and color pattern; details on shape of
bill, wings, and tail.:

I identified the bird by it's overall red color. Darkish earpatch, back, wings, and flanks. By it's dark bill and song like a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Also by it's tanager shape. The bird was about 8 inches. The bird was all red. A gray color came was observed on the nape, earpatch, back, wings and flanks. The head, throat, breast, and undertail coverts, were all bright red. The tail had some gray though was mostly red. The bill was solid dark and the legs were grayish. The shape of the bill was typical tanager shaped however a little heavier looking then most other tanagers. The wings shape was typical tanager shaped. The tail was squared off with a notch.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds if heard:

The bird sang a similar song to a Rose-breasted Grosbeak which was also in the park that morning.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Summer Tanager: red earpatch light colored bill.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've seen Hepatic Tanagers in CO 2 and in AZ 1 male.

I've seen 4 Summer Tanagers in Colorado and 10 in AZ.

Field Guides used to determine sighting:

National Geographic Society's Birds of North America

This report was written from notes made during____ after X;
from memory____.

Name: Brandon K. Percival

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Pueblo West, Colorado 81007-2604

(719)-547-3722

Signature: Brandon K. Percival

Return form to: Bill Prather

C.F.O. Official Records Committee

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