

Komar, Nick

1998-148

To: [mailed]
Subject: RC Submission: Eastern Towhee

✓ rec'd 11/98
DRAWING

ACCEPTED (6-1)

Submission of Sight Record to CFO Records Committee (Unusual Record), CoBS Records Committee, and Field Notes
Regional Editor:

Species: Eastern towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)

Date: May 14, 1998

No. birds seen: 1 Sex: Male Plumage (age): Adult

Locality: Julesburg Wayside Rest Area
Town: Julesburg

Elevation: Approx. 4000 ft.
County: Sedgwick

Time Observed: 11:40 am

Duration of Observation: 20 min

Other known observers:
Richard Stevens ?

Light conditions: Excellent, sunny (no wind)

Optical equipment: Swift "Panther" telescope, 15-45 power, zoom; Nikon "Egret" 8x40 binoculars

Distance, and how measured: 10-100 meters, estimated

Description: See attached sketch and description, made at the time of observation. An adult male "Rufous-sided Towhee"; a white checker at the base of each of three contiguous black primary feathers; also white edges on each of three black primary feathers; broad, elongate white patches on two black secondary feathers; no other white spots on wing coverts or back feathers. Sketch made while observing the bird at 27x at a distance of 10 m (measured afterwards by counting paces), as it perched singing.

Vocalizations:

Three slow, higher-pitched, 2-syllable notes, followed by a rapid succession of 6 lower-pitched, 2 syllable notes, with the accent always on the second syllable, or: "chewínk chewínk chewínk, chwí chwí chwí chwí chwí chwí"

Habitat: Open, dry riparian woodland with some wet swales, along the South Platte River, in the high Great Plains, a few miles from the Colorado/Nebraska border. Other birds present: house wrens, baltimore and bullock's orioles, flickers.

Elimination of Similar Species:

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) has white checker spots on wing coverts and some back feathers.

Prior experience:

Extensive experience with Eastern Towhees in the East during more than ten years of active birding, including recent observations in the field and in the hand in northern Florida (June; August, 1988); Extensive experience with similar species (Spotted Towhee) within the last year in Colorado.

Discussion:

I did not consult any field guides or published references in preparing this report.

From discussions on Cobirds email listserver, the range of Eastern Towhee is mainly restricted to East of Colorado (Eastern Nebraska and Eastern Kansas) although breeding has been suspected in northeast Colorado. Steve Dinsmore reported that Eastern Towhees are not present in Western Nebraska within 60 miles of the Colorado border. He suspects that Eastern Towhee-like birds in Northeastern Colorado are hybrids with Eastern Towhee morphological characteristics and Spotted Towhee vocalizations.

I submit this report to add to the collection of observations on this confusing situation in Northeastern Colorado.

This report was prepared Nov. 18, 1998, from memory and from sketch and notes taken during the observation.

Signed,

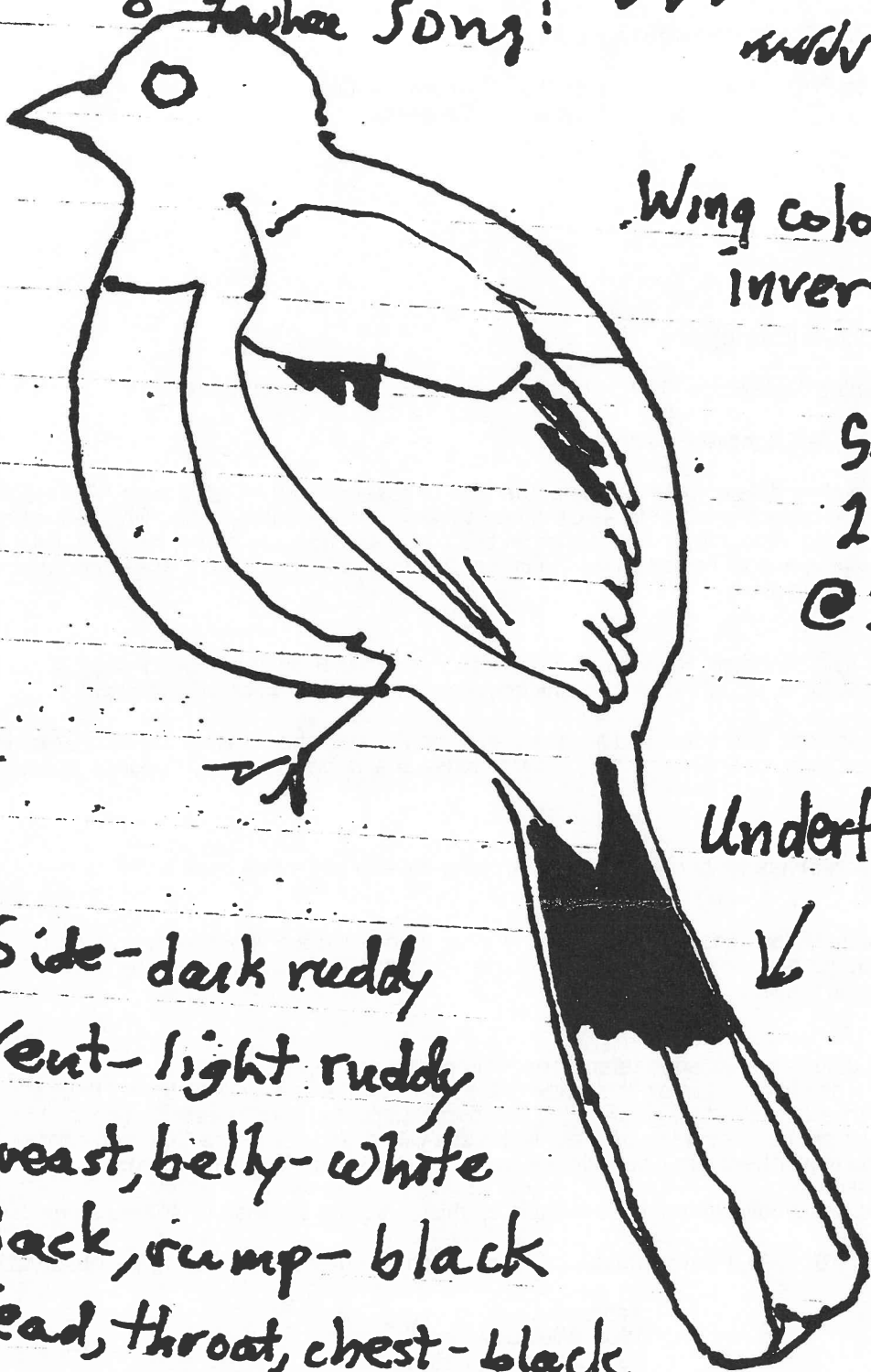
Nicholas Komar

Address:
1507 Wildwood Court
Fort Collins CO 80521
Tel: 970-416-7527 (h); 970221-6496 (w)

N. Komar
Sunny

5/11/98, Julesburg
11:40 am

♂ Towhee Song: ✓✓✓
wvdv



Wing colors-
inverted

Swift
27x
@30'

Undertail
↓

Side-dark ruddy
Vent-light ruddy
Breast, belly-white
Back, rump-black
Head, throat, chest-black
Eye-red