

rec'd 11/17/04

2004-07

CFO-RC FILE #:  
RESULTS:

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## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

(Please print or type. Attach photographs, drawings, and additional pages if necessary.)

Species: EASTERN Towhee Pipilo erythrophthalmus  
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s) of observation: 1/24/04; 2/22/04; Early - Mid MarchNumber of birds seen: 1 Sex: M Plumage: Exact location: Fish Creek Rd, Estes Park, CO 80517 NAD27 13 456795E to NAD27 459043E  
4464607N 4464559NCounty: Larimer Nearest town: ESTES PARK Elevation: 7920Length of observation: 30 seconds - 4 or 5 minutes Times(s) of observation: Morning & AfternoonOther observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Scott & Julie NONE - just my dogOther observers who independently saw the bird(s): Scott & Julie Roderer GARY MATTHEWS, Scott Rashid,  
WARNER & Ruth Roeser, SUSAN WARDLight conditions (quality; direction relative to bird's position): VARIABLEOptical equipment used: Bino - SW EL 8.5x42Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): 20-50 yards to within 3 feetWas bird photographed?: Yes If so, have you submitted photographs? AttachedWho took the photographs? Scott Rashid

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:

Fish Creek drainage, willow/River birch/conifer habitat. Hilly, rocky terrain.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying; feeding; habits; behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification):

Typical Towhee behavior - scratching in leaf litter, scurrying to cover in base of willows. Flew across Fish Creek road from homes with feeders. Top limbs of willows. Also observed in conifers.

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. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches, or copy of field notes):

See Attachment.

Describe bird's call or song:

Classic Eastern Towhee - short notes followed by trill.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

Spotted towhee - unspotted wingsDark-eyed Junco - smaller, coloration much more muted & less defined.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

No prior experience with Eastern. Spotted towhees nested on our hillside backyard in Loveland, CO.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation):

The Sibley Guide to Birds; Birds of North America (Kaufman); Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs (Eastern Region CO)This report was made from notes made during X or after X observation, or later from memory X.Date of written report: 11/15/04Reporting observer: Judith Wright Signature: Judith WrightObserver's address: 714 SANBORN DR, ESTES PARK, CO 80517

Send report to: Tony Leukering, P.O. Box 660, Brighton, CO. 80601

**Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)**

**Description:** Head-Black; Eyes-Red; Throat-black; Black above with rusty-red sides and buffy-orange undertail coverts; Back- slight white streaking; Belly-white; Tail with white corners

Typical Towhee behavior...scratching in leaf litter, scurrying under cover. The range of the bird, as I observed it, was approximately .10 of a mile. It fed on the ground at two documented homes that both had rocky terrain and juniper shrubs.

My first observation was in late January. Since I was not aware that an Eastern Towhee was a possibility in our area, I dismissed the sighting as a Spotted Towhee. After a casual discussion with Gary Matthews who stated that there was a possible Eastern Towhee sighting in Colorado, I decided to check the field guides. Since I could not remember any spots on the wings of the bird, I decided to verify or dispel my intuition. I mentioned the possible sighting to my birding friends, but they dismissed the possibility at that time. I observed the bird briefly again in late February and was almost positive at that point, but was not going to leave myself open to "she's off her rocker."

In early March, I was able to positively confirm my sighting, as I observed the towhee preening and scratching in the willows from approximately 3-4 feet. I carefully noted the identification marks...no spots on the wings or back, triangular white patch on the edge of the primaries, etc. At that time, I requested confirmation from our Estes Park Bird Club birders who are noted in the report.

I had various sightings of the towhee in March—it even flew across Fish Creek as I was driving by.

I did not hear the towhee sing until early March. Scott Rashid and I heard the bird singing at approximately 7 AM at the corner of Fish Creek and Sanborn Dr. The towhee flew into the juniper shrubs and Scott took the enclosed photos, as it was foraging.

A neighbor stated that the Towhee had been feeding regularly at her feeder most of the winter. The last report to me was that the towhee was still present on March 17.

Report by BARB ANDERSON

2004-07



Photos by Scott Rashid  
2/2004

