

ACCEPTED 6-1

CFO-ORC FILE # 1997-54

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

rec'd 6-10-97 ✓

NEW STATE RECORD ☐

UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: lesser Nighthawk
(Vernacular Name)

Chordeiles acutipennis
(Scientific Name)

Date(s): 28 May '97

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♀ Plumage: adult?

Locality: along Poudre River 1/2 mile n of Prospect Rd. Elevation: ~5200'

Nearest town: Fort Collins County: Larimer

Time(s) observed: 3:30 PM

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 10 minutes

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

none

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

none

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

mottled shade of a sunny day, moderate closed overstory of cottonwoods

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 8x42 Swift binoculars

Distance, and how measured: 40-100'

If photographed, type of equipment and film: —

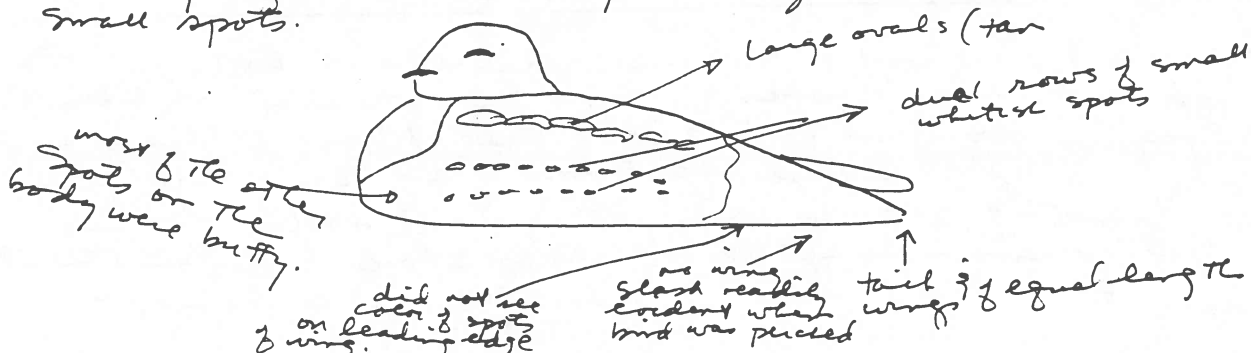
Who else photographed the bird? —

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Bird was first flushed from lower limb of willow (creek), where it erratically flew about 50 yards to horizontal limb of suburban elm, then flushed again. It then flew around thru the trees for a few loops and went out of sight to the south (or possibly across to the east side of the river).

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Bird was roughly common nighthawk size & proportions but appeared to be slightly smaller. At rest the bird's throat was tan. The body itself was basically medium-brown with a buffy tinge to it. The body and wings were marked with numerous small spots.



Description (continued):

In flight the bird showed a wing slash that was distinctly buffy brown. The exact position of this slash was not readily discernible because of its erratic flight (thus I could not tell if it was half way between "elbow" & wing tip or closer to the tip.) I did not see the tail or other features, except that the wings were longish and generally pointed and there was no white in the tail tips. Thus, it was not a poorwill (by shape) nor a larger nightjar because of the darkish, narrow tail. It was a nighthawk.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

None

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Riparian woodland. Primary overstory trees were plains cottonwood, crack willow, boxelder and Siberian elm.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Starting with the bird as a nightjar, its long narrow wings, longish tail, and longish body eliminated poorwill right away. The wing slash eliminates chuck willowidow and whip-poor-will. The buff throat and wing slash + erratic flight are inadequate to designate the bird as a lesser nighthawk (unless you have prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? Common's rarely show buff slashes in female sex).

Two lesser nighthawks seen earlier this month at Labor and studied extensively. Many lesser seen in SW US, few in CO.

Hundreds of common nighthawks seen.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: Nat'l. Geo

b) after observation: Nat'l. Geo. + all the other common field guides

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation X from memory X
Date and time report was written:

Reporting observer: David Leatherman Signature: David Leatherman

Address: 612 Stover St #7 Fort Collins Co 80524

Summary — I saw well a smallish nighthawk with a buffy throat and buffy wing slashes, flying erratically and silently in a riparian woodland on the east side of Fort Collins in mid-day. I did not see features of the wing tip (position of slash, length of 2nd primary, etc) as I would have liked. If common nighthawks ever show buffy wing slashes, I withdraw the record from consideration as a lesser.