

(A)

2002-211

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

rec'd 10/5/01

FO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name) Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Scientific Name) Sphyrapicus varius

Date(s) of occurrence: October 1, 2001

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Male Plumage: Adult

Exact location: CR 215 adjacent to Zink's Pond

County: La Plata Nearest town: Durango Elevation: about 6400 ft

Length of observation: about two (2) minutes Time(s) of observation: 11:15 am

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Peter Derven

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): None

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Full sunlight with sun nearly overhead

Optical equipment used: B&L Elite 10x42

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): About 50 ft

Was bird(s) photographed? No If so, have you submitted photos? N/A

Who took the photographs? N/A

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Bird flew onto a telephone pole very close to where we were standing while observing ducks on the pond. General habitat is spring-fed pond with some marshes surrounded by scattered pinyon pines and junipers. Pond is located on Florida Mesa southeast of Durango. It is near the Animas River and supports many agricultural fields for grazing livestock and growing hay that are frequently lined with pinyon pines and junipers. There are some cottonwoods in the area.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): Bird flew onto telephone pole and inspected it for food. It perched about two-thirds of the way up the pole and moved up and down and circled the pole looking for food. After about two minutes it flew southwest along the road and above the pinyon-junipers in the direction of the river. We could not relocate the bird.

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird 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(s). Describe other important 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 field notes): The bird was an adult male sapsucker and it showed all of the typical field marks. The crown and entire throat were bright red. The red throat was bordered by black extending from the base of the bill to the upper breast. This black border was quite distinct and relatively uniform in width, although wider at the breast. Behind this black border was a white line starting from above the bill and extending down the side of the neck and upper body to the breast while wrapping around the red throat bordered by the black line. This line changed from white at the top to a creamy-yellowish color below the throat and on the breast. In the center of the nape was an off-white vertical stripe. It was relatively wide and connected the white line above the eyes to the upper back. The back was barred with white on black. The prominent white wing stripe was evident on the flank while the bird was at rest and when the bird flew. The underside - lower chest and belly - was mostly off-white with blackish markings. The tail was black with strong white markings. In general the head of this bird displayed more white than I typically see in the very similar Red-naped Sapsucker adult male. Also, there was no red anywhere on the head except for the top of the head and the throat.

Describe bird's call or song: Not heard

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: The distinct black border around the red on the throat, the lack of red on the head except the crown and throat, and the width of the vertical white stripe on the back of the nape of the neck separated this bird from the adult male Red-naped Sapsucker.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have seen the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker many times as I birded the east for thirty years. I have seen the Red-naped Sapsucker frequently since I moved to Colorado in 1998 and many times during other western birding trips prior to 1998, especially to Arizona.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): Sibley and Peterson's Western Birds during observation and Kaufman's Advanced Birding and Colorado Birds by Andrews and Righter after returning home.

This report is from notes made during or after observation or later XX from memory

Date of written report: October 1, 2001

Reporting observer: James D. Beatty Signature: 

Reporting Observer's Address: 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail