

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD

Rec'd 11 Oct 02

(A)

Species: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Tyrannus forficatus

Date of observation: May 17, 2002

Number of birds seen: One Sex: Indeterminate Plumage: Adult

Exact location: Dotsero, on private property south of I-70 and north of gravel-pit lake

County: Eagle Nearest town: Gypsum, unless Dotsero qualifies Elevation: 6140

Length of observation: 30 seconds (?) Time: 9:00 a.m. or a little before

Other observers: None

Light conditions: Sun behind me

Optical equipment used: 7x binoculars

Distance from bird: 50 feet, more or less

No photograph

Habitat: Along a roadway in an area left rather barren by gravel operations. Vegetation is mostly tumbleweeds plus a few bushes; some poplar trees 100 feet or more away.

Behavior: Not especially alarmed by the approach of my car, the bird was catching insects close to the ground, perching on the stouter weeds. All or at least most of the insects caught were flying

Description: Somewhere near a robin in size but several inches longer than a robin by virtue of an extremely long, forked tail. Body color light gray, wings and tail mostly black. Pink wash along the flanks below the folded wing grading to fairly bright red in the armpits when the bird raised its wings. A most beautiful bird!

Vocalizations: None

Similar species: The only other bird in this size range with an extremely long, deeply forked tail is the Fork-tailed Flycatcher, which can be distinguished by a black head and white wing linings.

Prior experience: I saw my first Scissor-tail in 1946 when I was stationed at Corpus Christi, Texas. The next one I saw was near here (Eagle) on 5/19/79. Others in southeast Colorado in 1986. One nested south of Glenwood Springs in 1994 with a kingbird as a partner and raised several hybrid young.

Books used: I needed no book to know what the bird was, but I looked up the scientific name in the National Geographic field guide and compared it with the Fork-tailed Flycatcher in that book and in the Sibley Guide to Birds.

This report was made later - much, much later - purely from memory, except for a note on the date. September 30, 2002

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