

APPENDIX II

31-91-42

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

ACCEPTED

Species: Ruby-Throated Hummingbird; Archilochus colubris
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): July 13, 1991 Time Bird Seen: 11:30AM to 12:15PM

Locality: Rye, Pueblo County, Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 10 x 40 Zeiss

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Photos will be submitted by Tom Shane

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

Light conditions: Good

Distance from bird, and how measured: 15 feet estimated.

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

This bird fed at Hummingbird feeder

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Mixed ponderosa-scrub oak habitat in rear yard of a single family residence in semi-rural setting, 1 1/2 miles from the small town of Rye.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Tom Shane 1706 Belmont Garden City, Kansas 67846

I did not put this bird on the hotline because it was seen only on July 13-14 and not seen again. Also, property owner/occupant of the property where the bird was seen just got out of the hospital after major surgery.

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field. Fairly small hummingbird, comparable in size to Black-chinned, had long dark needle like bill. Forehead, crown, nape, & back, were emerald green. Breast was white with white collar extending along sides of neck toward nape. Belly & flanks were green becoming whitish toward center of belly giving underparts a "vested" appearance. Tail was solid dark and according to Shane, tail was deeply notched. I did not see tail shape well. Eye was dark with a distinct white speck slightly above, behind, & adjacent to eye. Chin was solid black & formed a dark chin strap which gave the deep orange-red gorgette a square shaped appearance. The chin strap above the gorgette squared it off.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: This bird made no sound. It did not call nor did we hear any noise coming from the wings.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

This bird looked very similar to a Black-chinned which has a broader black chin strap & a purple gorgette.
♂ Broad-tailed Hummingbird has white eye ring especially noticeable behind the eye; Broad-tailed adult males have white chin spot above gorgette and light border above gorgette in malar region. Broad-tails have more white in belly & notes are green below as Ruby-Throated. Broad-tails almost always give loud ringing noise in flight. Broad-Tailed adult male has lighter rose-red throat.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have seen many Broad-tailed; Black-chinned Hummingbirds in Colorado & Arizona.

I have seen many Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds in my native state of Missouri.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after ☒ observation;
from memory _____.

Name (print) : Dave Silverman

Mailing address: P.O. Box 362 Rye, CO 81069

Signature: Dave Silverman

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

XC: Hugh Kingery
American Birds.

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We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): July 13, 1991 Time Bird Seen: 11:20 am to 12:05 pm MDT

Locality: Mel Hull backyard (Oak street?)

Rye, Pueblo Co., Colorado
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell Custom 8x36 Binocs

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Pentax Super Program w/ 400mm lens + Flash - Ektachrome 200 -

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: AHY

Light conditions: Good

Distance from bird, and how measured: 168 ft ± w/ scale on 400mm lens

Describe the bird's overall behavior: The Ruby-throated Hummingbird would fly into the tree above the feeder, then during a one minute ± period would advance toward the feeder changing limbs (perches) several times before going on to the feeder. All the Broad-tailed Hummingbirds would come in from a distance and fly directly to the feeder.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Residential area built in a mixed Ponderosa Pine, Oak, Grassland habitat, probably called Pothill area?

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

① Dave Silverman, PO Box 362, Rye Colorado 81069

② and my wife Sara Shane observing from a further distance - observed a red-throated hummingbird w/ no wing-trill

APPENDIX II Continued

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1. I first observed a red-orange throated Hummingbird coming into a feeder that gave absolutely no wing trail.
2. observed the only white area on the head which was behind the eye
3. Observed the forked tail once - had a very good look! → W
4. noticed the bird's approach to the feeder different than the area's Broad-tailed Hum.

From the photo:

5. under tail coverts are darker than a broad tail
6. the rufous breast area has less white than most broad tails.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--
i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

none

this Ruby-throated Hummingbird vs. a Broad-tailed Hummingbird

1. Orange-red throat vs. rose red throat

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

2. no wing trail vs. wing trail
3. forked tail vs. rounded tail

From photo 4. black patch from chin back to and below & behind eye (this was observed by S. Hansen)
vs. black patch not present in broad-tail

5. single white dot behind eye vs. additional white around eye & below chin

From photo 6. under tail coverts darker vs. faintly lighter under tail coverts in broad tails

Prior experience with this and similar species: YES

Birded in eastern Kansas most of my life in the range of the ruby throat. lived in Colo 2 years and have made numerous trips to Colo since, being fairly familiar w/ the Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

This report was written from notes made during ☒ after ☒ observation;
from memory ☒. From photo ☒

Name (print): Tom Shane

Mailing address: PO Box 876, Garden City, KS 67846

Signature: Tom Shane

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

31-91-42

U·A·L·R

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

2 July 1995

Mr. Bill Prather
13810 WCR 1
Longmont, Colorado 80504

Dear Bill:

Sorry for the long delay in answering your request to evaluate two rare bird sightings for the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Records Committee. I have been very busy with a number of other items. However, as you will note from the paragraphs that follow, I have put some effort into trying to provide you with an assessment of the two reports that you sent me. I hope this helps; it's just one person's opinion but I feel pretty good about the report from Rye, Colorado by Silverman and Shane. The report by Brenda Wiard is not, in my opinion, credible.

I will begin by dismissing the record turned in by Brenda Wiard of a bird that she thought, after banding and releasing it, might have been an adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. If she had it in the hand and knows her Broad-tails then this should not have been a problem. Among other items, she reports that she did not notice any difference in the color of the gorget from that of a typical Broad-tailed male; if this had been an adult male Ruby-throated she would have noticed. In all honesty, she should not have had any problem distinguishing an adult male Broad-tailed from an adult male Ruby-throated. Anyone banding birds should be paying close enough attention to have noticed this, particularly if we are dealing with adult males in the hand. I would not put any faith in this report.

The report by Dave Silverman and Tom Shane is interesting and has held my interest for some time now. I have read their descriptions and have carefully examined the photograph on numerous occasions over the last two months. I have compared their photograph (not great but it does show a few characters) to specimens of various species (Rufous, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned, and Ruby-throated). Photographs can be very misleading but given the description of the bird, the shape of the tail (see below), the orange/red coloration of the gorget (often misleading in photographs but in this photo probably accurate), breast and belly markings, crissum, and lack of wing trill I am inclined to agree that this bird probably was an adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Over the last few months I have spent a number of hours searching for something in the photograph that would be more definitive. It was not until the other day when I was going through a number of adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird specimens did I find what finally allowed me to come to a reasonably certain conclusion regarding the Colorado sighting. I was not thinking about the bird that was seen and photographed in Colorado but when I picked up one of the adult male Ruby-throated specimens and held it at a distance, it dawned on me that the shape of the tail (i.e., the actual positioning of the feathers) resembled the configuration of the tail as shown in the photograph. I went and got the photo from my file and indeed it was virtually a perfect match.

Without something more tangible, it's hard to make a positive identification. However, if I had to assign the bird in the photograph to a particular species, I would vote for Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The photo itself is by no means definitive, but if one is to believe Silverman and Shane (I have no reason not to), then I believe there is sufficient grounds for calling the bird a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Sincerely,

William H. Baltosser

William H. Baltosser
Associate Professor - Biology