

Recd 6/99 wpl

1999 - 89

ACCEPT 7-0

CFO-ORC-FILE# \_\_\_\_\_

### COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

**Species:** Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)

**Date:** 30 April 1999

**Number of birds seen:** 1

**Sex:** Male

**Plumage:** Adult

**Locality:** Willow Creek, behind Lamar Community College

**Elevation:** 3625'

**Nearest town:** Lamar, CO

**County:** Prowers

**Time observed:** Once briefly at 1050, then again at 1115 hrs.

**Duration of observation:** A total of 2-3 minutes during several observations.

**Other observers with you:** Brandon Percival

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** The following day (1 May), several others including Mark Janos refound the male Ruby-throated Hummingbird at the Lamar CC grove.

**Light conditions:** Overcast skies, intermittent rain. During the day and evening prior to this observation, there were strong winds from the southeast.

**Optical equipment:** Leica 10X42

**Distance from bird:** 4-5 meters

**Description of the bird's behavior:** The bird was very active and was observed foraging in the Russian olive trees. Although the bird flew from the initial point of observation, he returned to the same general area several times and perched twice in almost the exact same spot. At each observation, the hummingbird was at or just above eye level either perched, hovering or foraging. The bird appeared to be somewhat nervous and quickly moved around to different locations.

**Description of the bird:** At 1050, I observed a bird hovering amongst the branches of a Russian olive tree at eye level for 3-4 seconds before the bird flew up and over my right shoulder and out of sight. During this time I was able to see a green hummingbird and a quick flash of red during flight. Brandon was birding nearby and I brought to his attention that I had just seen a hummingbird with red but that it was too brief a look to positively identify to species. We searched the area intensively for several minutes before expanding our search to cover a broader area. We returned to the same spot and at 1115 the bird reappeared and perched on a branch just above eye level and I obtained clear frontal views at very close range (4 meters). What I observed was a hummingbird with a green head and greenish sides, and a bright red gorget contrasting with white upperparts below and a black chin above. The bird moved its head from side to side and I concentrated on the presence of the black chin which would eliminate it from all other hummingbirds except those of the genus *Archilochus*. I knew that separating it from Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) was most important and that the presence of a red throat, not blue/violet, would eliminate Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*). During these observations of the perched bird, the tail was concealed from view by vegetation and I was not able to identify any characteristics such as tail shape or color. After about a minute, the bird flew up and over a group of dense Russian olive trees 6 meters to the west. B. Percival then circled around to the opposite side while I remained at the location of the initial observation. Percival located the bird and observed the red gorget, black chin and forked tail. After another minute had passed, the bird flew away



and out of view. We discussed the characteristics of the bird we had seen for several minutes and concluded that the bird we had found was indeed an adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

**Description of the bird's song and call:** none

**Description of the habitat in which the bird was observed:** The grove behind Lamar CC is a short riparian corridor that contains dense vegetation of shrubs and deciduous trees. Cottonwoods, willows and Russian olive trees are present here and help to create a multilayered canopy. Willow creek flows through the grove and provides moist, lush vegetation at ground level and the proliferation of shrubs. For these reasons, and because of its location on the eastern plains, this area acts as an ideal stopover for birds during migration and an attraction for lost and wandering birds.

**Elimination of similarly appearing species:** The two most likely occurring species in southeastern Colorado and which pose (in my opinion) the biggest identification challenge with a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (RTHU) are the Black-chinned (BCHU) and Broad-tailed (BTHU) Hummingbirds. Andrews and Righter state that the BCHU is an uncommon summer visitor on the eastern plains and the BTHU is a rare nonbreeding summer resident and migrant on the eastern plains (Colorado Birds, 1992). Other possibilities may include Rufous (RUHU) and Calliope (CAHU) Hummingbirds which would most likely occur during migration.

Solid, brightly colored throat feathers indicate a male hummingbird in most North American species. The presence of a solid, brightly colored red gorget eliminates all North American female hummingbirds except Plain-capped Starthroat which would be most unlikely and can be eliminated by a much longer bill and a large white malar stripe bordering a red throat (sexes similar). Otherwise, sexing is possible, and identification is made easier. I was able to immediately eliminate BCHU because the gorget was red and not violet. The presence of the black chin just below the bill, which our bird possessed, is a characteristic only of hummingbirds in the genus *Archilochus* and I was therefore able to eliminate RUHU, CAHU and BTHU using this fieldmark. CAHU is also smaller and has streaked, red throat feathers that extend down on each side. RUHU has a rufous head and back not present on our bird. The National Geographic Guide states that except during winter molt, all *Selasphorus* adult males' wingbeats produce a loud whistle (Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 1999). I was able to observe our bird in flight at close range and heard no trill or whistle. This, in addition to the lack of a black chin, eliminates male BTHU.

**Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:** I am very familiar with BTHU as a breeder in Colorado. I have observed them closely at feeders as well as in the mountains and foothills of Colorado. I have also observed RTHU in its normal range in Texas. During summer 1997, I lived and worked in southeast AZ and was able to closely observe many BCHU.

**List books if they helped in your identification:** National Geographic Guide to Birds of North America and Pyle Identification of North American Passerines helped to confirm characteristics such as the presence of a black chin in only *Archilochus* hummingbirds and trills produced during flight of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds.

**This report was written from notes taken during/after observation from memory:** Written from notes taken after observation and from memory on 15 May 1999.

**Reporting observer:** Peter Gaede

**Signature:** 

**Address:** 182 E. St. Vrain, Col. Springs, CO 80903 (719) 641-2944



CFO-RC FILE # 1999-89ACCEPT 7-0**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
SIGHT RECORD FORM**

Red 5/14/99 upl

RESULTS \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY.

SPECIES Ruby-throated Hummingbird Archilochus colubris  
(COMMON NAME) (SCIENTIFIC NAME)DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE 4-30-99 & 5-1-99NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN one SEX male PLUMAGE AlternateEXACT LOCATION 40 YARDS EAST of the service garage on the S.E. corner of Lamar Comm. College (LCC)COUNTY Prowers NEAREST TOWN Lamar ELEVATION 3622'LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 4-30 → 1 min 5-1 → 3 min TIME OF OBSERVATION 4-30 → 18:30 5-1 → ? EARLY AM ~ 9:00OTHER OBSERVERS: BRANDON PERCIVAL, MARK JANOS, BOB DICKSON, DAVE  
QUESENBERY & Vic ZERBILIGHT CONDITIONS 4-30 → RAIN, cloudy 5-1 → mostly cloudy, breaks in clouds  
occasionally - sun had poked  
Then AT TIME of best observationOPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: ZISSL 10x40DISTANCE FROM THE BIRD: 4-30 - 15 ft 5-1 - 20 ft & 5 ftWAS THE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED Y (N) PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED Y (N)  
WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? \_\_\_\_\_DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD  
OCCURRED:General - willow creek riparian area east of L.C.C.Specific - Bird was seen resting on dead branches  
of Russian olive trees at the base of mature  
cottonwood trees. Under cover was various grasses  
and flowering current sp. (yellow tubular flowers)

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S BEHAVIOR ( FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIOR USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE ID):

4-30- Bird WAS OBSERVED RESTING UNDER A LARGE BRANCH of A RUSSIAN OLIVE DURING the RAIN

- 5-1
- ① BIRD WAS OBSERVED RESTING on dead branches
  - ② BIRD FLEW DIRECTLY AT ME AND DISPLAYED APPROX. 5' in front of ME
  - ③ OBSERVED Flying from branch to branch, RESTING BRIEFLY ON EACH BRANCH

DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. INCLUDE 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 ID. THE BIRD. DESCRIBE OTHER DETAILS SUCH AS COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYES, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT TO MAKING THE ID.. ( ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS, DRAWINGS, SKETCHES, OR COPY OF FIELD NOTES) :

4-30-99 - PERCHED bird; BACK VIEW AND SIDE of head ONLY SEEN

Bill - Long, slender Black bill with a noticeable ENLARGEMENT TOWARDS THE END. Bill APPROX  $1\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 TIMES LENGTH of the HEAD.

EYE - BLACK

Gorget - Full gorget PRESENT ~~the~~ HOWEVER NO color SEEN, EXTENDED from BASE of bill, below EYE onto side of NECK & THROAT

CROWN - Noticeably WET - CHARCOAL GRAY

NAPE, BACK & Rump - iridescent GREEN, Terminal Edges of individual feathers NOTICABLE.

Wings - charcoal grey. Each PRIMARY FEATHER uniform STAGGERED on the folded wing. Primary EXTENSION WAS SHORT OF the END of the TAIL.

Tail - CHARCOAL grey. UNMARKED. OUTER RECTRICES Noticeably Longer than inner

5-1-99 - MID-AIR Display - DIRECTLY FACING ME

Bill - BLACK, EYES - BLACK

Gorget - RED below turning black UNDER the EYE & chin

BREAST - BACK ground color WAS dirty white with a grayish wash & BELLY ACROSS the BREAST. NARROWEST in the middle AND WIDENING TOWARD the wings THEN EXTENDING DOWN the FLANKS

Wing - BASICALLY a GRAY blur. - I REMEMBER them being POINTED

Tail - CHARCOAL GRAY, UNMARKED, OUTER RECTRICES LONGER THAN INNER RECTS giving the TAIL A MODERATE FORKED APPEARANCE

LEGS - NOT NOTICED

I NEVER ONCE HEARD ANY wing NOISE from this BIRD



DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM:

BLACK-chinned Hummingbird — BLACK/VIOLET gorget

BROADTAIL Hummingbird — NO BLACK in gorget  
— METALIC wing NOISE

WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING

SPECIES: I HAVE lots of EXPERIENCE with BTHU WHICH ARE REGULAR VISITORS to my feeders MAY - Sept. I HAVE EVEN LEARNED to I.D. different ♂'s by slight DIFFERENCES in their wing NOISE. I GREW UP WITH RTHU BUT REALLY NEVER STUDIED THEM CLOSELY BECAUSE THEY WERE the only HUMMERS AROUND.

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES RECORDINGS, OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR ID. (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

- ① NAT. GEO. BIRDS of N.A. 20<sup>th</sup> ED. > STUDIED ON 4-30 NIGHT to know what to look for.
- ② ADVANCED BIRDING - KENN KAUFMAN
- ③ Id guide to N.A. BIRDS PART I, PETER PYLE - HAD SOME QUESTIONS on 'FORKED-TAIL' APPEARANCE.

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM <sup>TAPED</sup> / NOTES MADE DURING ☒ OR AFTER  
\_\_\_\_\_ OBSERVATION, OR LATER FROM MEMORY ☒ <sub>AND</sub> \_\_\_\_\_.

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT 5-3-99

REPORTING OBSERVER : RIC OLSON

SIGNATURE ROL

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1999-89

## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

## RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Archilochus colubrisRed 1/20/00 wpl  
ACCEPT 7-6Location: Lamar Community College grove = Willow Creek; Lamar; Prowers County; ColoradoDate: May 1, 1999

This bird appeared approximately April 30 (I am unsure of inclusive dates) and was found by Brandon Percival and others. It appeared during intense frontal rainstorms lasting about 3 days in southeastern Colorado, caused by an "Albuquerque low". The morning of May 1 was misty and had light rain, off and on. I observed the bird in the riparian area where it had been seen occasionally about 2 days. I saw it two times in mid-morning, but both observations were very brief. I was looking directly at the bird the second time, and saw it perched for about 15 seconds, and also in flight as it hovered directly facing me for about 10 seconds at about 20 feet distance (and at eye level). I used B&L Elite 10x40 binoculars. I would have liked much longer views but the field marks seemed conclusive. I was fortunate in my views to have a partial sideways view of the perched bird and a head-on view of the hovering bird. Not all observers were so lucky. A number of CFO birders saw this bird that morning and the previous day.

Description:

The bird was a male in breeding plumage. In flight the bird was essentially silent, lacking the loud metallic ring of breeding plumaged male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. I suspect it made some subtle flight noise but in the heat of the moment I was unable to hear any sound from the wings at all. This was quite a small Archilochus hummingbird, about 3 1/2" long. It seemed comparable in size to a Black-chinned. The bill was medium-long for a hummingbird and straight. The uppersides, crown and back of the bird were bright glossy green. The undersides were mainly white. The flanks were a dirty grayish color. I did not see this feature well, and the flanks may have had a green tint, but they did lack buffy or orange tones. I saw the tail shape well as it perched and then took off. It was all blackish, lacked spots and was squared. I tried to tell if the tail was notched, but it appeared squared-off to me. The gorget was confined to the chin, throat and lower sides to the face. The upper edge of the gorget was blackish, but the main part of the gorget was a bright red with clear orangish tones. I was not expecting this orange undertone to the gorget but this was very distinct to me.

Similar Species:

Selasphorus hummingbirds have rounded tails with white outer tail feathers. Calliope lacks solid-colored gorget, the the others have orange-based tail feathers. Broad-tailed Hummingbird has a loud metallic whistle in flight. Black-chinned is perhaps most similar, but this bird had a clear, obvious reddish-orange, not blackish-purple, gorget

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the Colorado hummingbirds, some many times, and have seen many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in the east.

This report was prepared from notes made after observation.

Mark Janos  
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