

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD REPORT  
RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD

34-74-92

Accepted *JH*  
8/20/1974

Species: Vermilion Flycatcher / *Pyrocephalus rubinus*

Date(s): May 22, 1971 and May 29, 30, and 31, 1971

Time seen: morning and  
afternoon on all days listed

Locality: Hack Ranch, Elevation 9750'

Nearest Town: Jefferson Colorado (4 miles)

County: Park

Other Observers who identified this bird:

Fern G. Hack	1034 So. Steele	777-7893
Albert Hack	1034 So. Steele	777-7893
Kathy Hawkins	257 Pearl, #201	778-1256

Optical Equipment: 8x32 Leitz Trinovid Binoculars, Honeywell Pentax Spotmatic with  
150 mm Takumar telephoto lens.

Light Conditions: Watched for several days at different times of day. Weather varied  
from fair to snowing, so light conditions varied greatly.

Distance from Bird: My first glance was from inside the house to a barbed wire fence  
five feet away. After that distances varied. Generally when in the Aspen grove  
we were able to get within about 30-40 feet. Measured by counting the number of  
fence posts away. (fence runs along one end of the grove and this was the area  
he was in and he often sat on the wire.)

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: Male

Plumage: Adult

Overall Appearance and Size: about the size of a White-crowned Sparrow, a little ball  
of fire, though very inconspicuous when his back faced you.

Detailed Description:

Bill: black or dark

Legs: dark

Crown and Forehead: Scarlet

Eye: Black

Nape: Brownish black

Face: Scarlet with black line across and through eye  
Throat: Scarlet

Breast and Sides: Scarlet

Belly and Flanks: Scarlet

Undertail Coverts:

Back: brownish black

Wings: brownish black

Underwings:

Rump:

Uppertail Coverts: brownish black

Upper Side of Tail: brownish black

Under Side of tail:

Shape of tail:

Voice: silent

Behavior: This bird acted much in the manner of other flycatchers. Leaving his perch  
to grab an insect and then return to the perch. He moved rather nervously from  
perch to perch, though under watchful eye he allowed us to move rather closely.

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Habitat: Aspen grove next to mountain meadow with native grasses.

Prior Experience with this species: none

How were similarly appearing species eliminated? Tanagers do not have dark bill and dark back and none have the black line across the face and through the eye.

This report was written from: Notes made after observation and photos taken both weekends.

Signed: *Carol Hack*

Street Address: *1034 South Steele*  
Town and State: *Denver, Colorado*

Zip: *80209*

Date Prepared: August 13, 1974



August 13, 1974

Accepted  
JK  
8/20/1974

Jack-

I'm enclosing a report and photo of a Vermilion Flycatcher, who descended upon our ranch amid a snowstorm in May of 1971. I'm sorry that it is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years after the fact, but at the time I knew nothing of the Record Committee. As I told you previously, Hugh Kingery did see the picture at the time and he included a report of it in his American Birds article for Spring Migration 1971.

I've also included a few slides in case you wish to see them. In your note you said you would get a picture made (and feel free to do so), but you may have the picture I've sent. The problem in making pictures from the slides is that you must have Kodak enlarge just the portion around the bird so that he is easier to see. That's why I'm sending you one already done. I'm sorry about the red flare on the slides, but my camera was leaking light - a situation now repaired. I would appreciate the return of the slides when you are finished with them.

The event occurred as follows:

My mother had gone to visit relatives in Vancouver and my father and I had driven up to the ranch for the weekend. I was in the house unpacking when he came rushing into the house - "Come quick, there's a tropical bird out here". Well, of course, it was no where to be seen. I returned to the house and within a few minutes I happened to glance out the living room window and there on the fence exactly five feet from the window was a scarlet bird. I rushed for the camera and did get a picture before it flew off. I was very new at birding, but I did have a field guide (Peterson). I quickly found the picture in the guide, but as I read about it I had trouble believing that it was really here in South Park at nearly 9800' in the middle of a light snowstorm. We saw it again that day (Sat. 5/22), but not the next day, though we were rather house-bound because of the weather.

When I returned to Denver, I called the Audubon Society and they gave me Patty's number. She was very excited and took directions to our ranch which she said she would give to those interested at the D.F.O. meeting the next night.

The following weekend we returned, this time with my mother along. The weather was still cold and somewhat snowy. We did not see the bird around the house, but as we walked in the Aspen grove we saw him again. He stayed in one area for the next three days, and we watched him often, took many pictures, and even showed him off to four guests. Kathy Hawkins was the only birder in the group, so I've included just her name on the report.

The following weekend Bill and Patty came up. Of course, the bird was no where in sight. We never did see him again. Hopefully, he made his way back to more hospitable regions as we never did find a little red body.

I'm sorry I've been so long in replying to your request for this report, but I've been working on a Nesting Season report for Hugh.

One last note - I've compiled this report from notes taken at the time, and I'm afraid as a novice birder I did not note all the areas asked for on the C.F.O. form. So I've filled out just what I did note and left the other areas blank. Hopefully the picture will be conclusive.

Sincerely,

Carol Hack