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May 15, 1999

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**SPECIES:**Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)**DATE:**

May 15, 1999

**TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION:**

9:20-9:25am

**LOCATION:**

Chatfield State Park; Approximately 1/2 mile upstream from Kingfisher Bridge on the East side of the Platte River where the first gravel pond outlets to the Platte River.

**COUNTY:**

Douglas County

**OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:**

Jim Norton (address unknown)

**OPTICAL EQUIPMENT I USED:**

Zeiss 10X40 binoculars

**WEATHER CONDITIONS:**

**SKY:** Mostly clear  
**WIND:** calm  
**TEMP:** 68F

**BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION:**

The sun was to the left and shining upon the bird.

**DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED:**

Estimate the bird was 40-50 feet away.

**NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN:**

1 (one)

**SEX:**

Male.

**PLUMAGE:**

Full breeding plumage

**BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR:**

The bird was first discovered by Jim Norton at 8:50am. Jim and I happened to meet on the West side of the river and compared sightings. After quizing Jim I decided it was worth investigating. I hiked upstream from Kingfisher Bridge on the East side of the Platte River and arrived at the outlet of the first gravel pit pond at about 9:17am. I did not see the flycatcher right away. After looking around for a few minutes it suddenly "appeared" at the top of a Russian Olive on the south side of the outlet channel. It "sallied" several times (returning each time to the top of the Russian Olive) and caught and ate several small flies/midges. I left the bird ten minutes later with the bird still at the top of the Russian Olive.

**SIZE:**

A little larger and plumper than a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*).

**DESCRIPTION:**

Crown bright red with a very slight hint of a crest. Nape, back, wings and tail charcoal. Throat, breast, belly and flanks were the same bright red color as the crown. The undertail coverts were pinkish with small areas of white showing (still molting?). Auriculars and lores charcoal giving the bird a masked look. The charcoal auriculars met the charcoal nape setting off and isolating the red crown. Iris black. Bill was thin, black, and needle-like. Legs and feet black.

**VOCALIZATION:**

No vocalizations were heard.

**ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:**

Rose-throated Becard – only a small amount of red on the lower throat and upper breast; thicker bill.

Say's Phoebe – Salmon colored breast and belly not red; larger; not masked.

Finches-Stout, conical bills; gray wings not charcoal; red not usually as extensive; typically don't sally for insects.

**PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:**

Vermilion Flycatcher – Have seen several in Colorado and Arizona in the last ten years.

My Colorado sightings (remarkably all from Chatfield) are:

4/30/89 – 1 female below heronry overlook

11/19/89 - 12/08/89 – 1 female at road maintenance buildings at  
southwest end of the park (near Waterton)

4/4/90 – 4/6/90 – 1 female at the Plum Creek delta parking lot

4/17/91 – 4/21/91 – 1 male at the east marina boat launch area

Rose-throated Becard – Have seen only one in Arizona (August 1997)

Finches – Have seen thousands of House Finches and hundreds of Cassin's Finches in Colorado  
as well as hundreds of Red Crossbills.

**BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:**

Peterson's "Western Birds", Third Edition, was consulted for scientific names used in this report.

**NAME:**

Jocelyn M. Kellner  
8612 West Hinsdale Place  
Littleton, Colorado 80128

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** May 20, 1999