

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

2001-30

ACCEPTED

rec'd 4/30/01

Species:

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*  
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s) of occurrence: Saturday, April 14, 2001, 9 to 10 AM

Number of birds seen: four

Sex: Two males, two females

Plumage: Adult breeding

Exact location: Southwest corner of Higbee Cemetery, off CR 804, Otero

County Colorado, where a pair was seen last spring

Elevation: 4500' (?)

County: Otero

Nearest town: La Junta

Length of Observation: over thirty minutes

Time of Observation: 9a to 10a

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who independently saw the birds: ?

Light conditions: Excellent morning light, full sunlight, with sun at my back and at right angles

Optical equipment used: Orion Savanna 8X40 binoculars

Distance from bird: fifty feet to 100 yards - I didn't want to crowd them, as they were defending territory and displaying.

Was the bird photographed? No, but I recorded some sound tape

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the birds occurred: open ranchland just east of a ranch house and outbuildings. The birds moved up and down an irrigation ditch that was flowing water. They moved from junipers into Chinese elms that were budding out.

Describe the bird's behavior: The males were chasing one another, flying up fluttering wings in display and calling, appeared to be establishing and defending territory. At least one female was present. I never saw more than one female at any time, but they were much more shy and kept more in the trees, but because of one seen farther west and another on the east, I suspect two females were present.

Describe the bird in detail:

The VEFL is unlikely to be confused with any other bird. The males had brilliant red breast, belly, flanks, throat, crown and head. They had a strongly contrasting black wings and back, a black mask over the eyes, auriculars, black lores and bill. It was smaller than the Say's Phoebe nearby. The crown was flat as compared to the phoebe. The female was much different than the male, gray color replacing the red of the male, with some streaks on the flanks and a faint mask or eye patch, a salmon color on the vent area, somewhat reminiscent of the color on a Say's Phoebe's belly. Female was shaped like the male, differently shaped than the phoebe, because of shorter tail and wings.

Describe the bird's song and calls if heard: Chattering high pitched flight calls; call note high pitched 'peet'

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: not much similar - scarlet tanager, larger, much larger, different colored bill, red back, no black mask, different shaped bird with longer tail, different behavior, wrong habitat.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: Seen frequently when growing up in South Texas and birding in the Rio Grande Valley. Many seen on my recent trip (3/24 -3/26) to Big Bend NP.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): Nat Geo, Sibley

This report was made from notes taken during and after observation.

Respectfully submitted.

Observer: David M. Elwonger M.D.

Address: 1017 Mars Drive  
Colorado Springs CO 80906  
719 632-1502 e-mail [elwonger@qwest.net](mailto:elwonger@qwest.net)



rec'd 5/4  
**Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form**  
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

**Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!**

CFO-RC FILE X: **2001-30**

**RESULTS:**

Species:(Common Name) **Vermillion Flycatcher** (Scientific Name) **Pyrocephalus rubinus**

Date(s) of occurrence: **4/29/01**

Number of birds seen: **Two** Sex: **Male & Female** Plumage: **Adult Breeding**

Exact location: **Higbee Cemetery**

County: **Otero** Nearest town: **Higbee** Elevation:

Length of observation: **15 minutes** Time(s) of observation: **About noon.**

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: **Bill Maynard**

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): **MOB**

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: **Sunny & clear**

Optical equipment used: **Leica 8X42 binocs.**

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): **A few feet.**

Was bird(s) photographed? **No** If so, have you submitted photos?

Who took the photographs?

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: **In cottonwoods near an irrigation ditch.**

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): **Male was displaying and chasing female.**

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the 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 identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes): **Male was bright red with dark wings. Dark eyeline extending to back of neck and down back and tail. Female Gray brown above with white throat and breast. Belly and undertail coverts peachy color. White eyebrow.**

Describe bird's call or song:

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **Very distinct species.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **I have seen several.**

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): **None**

This report is from notes made during or after observation or later **X** from memory

Date of written report: **5/1/01**

Reporting observer: **Rachel Kolokoff**

Signature: *Rachel Kolokoff*

Reporting Observer's Address: **1721 Cottonwood Pt. Dr.**

City: **Ft. Collins** State: **CO**

Zip: **80524**

**Send report to:**  
**Colorado Birds Record Committee**  
**Tony Leukering**  
**P.O. Box 157**  
**Arvada, CO 80001**



R- 25 Jun 01  
**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM**

(Please print or type. Attach photographs, drawings, and additional pages if necessary.)

Species: Vermilion Flycatcher Pyrocephalus rubinus  
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s) of observation: 14 June 2001Number of birds seen: 3 Sex: 2 ♂ 1 ♀ Plumage: This report of 1st year ♂ or = SY ♂Exact location: Higbee Cemetery, Otero CountyCounty: \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest town: Higbee Elevation: \_\_\_\_\_Length of observation: 30 minutes Times(s) of observation: Late afternoonOther observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Mike Ramsey

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird's position): good

Optical equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): \_\_\_\_\_

Was bird photographed?: Yes If so, have you submitted photographs? YesWho took the photographs? Tom ShaneDescribe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Young male observed mostly the time along canal south side of Higbee Cemetery. Another AHY ♂ observed east of cemetery. A ♀ observed west of Cemetery.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying; feeding; habits; behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification): \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the bird(s) in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include overall size and shape, and how you placed the bird(s) 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 identify the bird. Describe other details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches, or copy of field notes):

This report submitted to verify the existence of the SY ♂ in order to establish the best possible count of the entire Vermilion Flycatcher population for 2001. This bird showed a few yellow feathers on the belly & one on the breast. The

Describe bird's call or song: \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

Overall color was lighter/more of a red orange. You will need a magnifying glass to examine this photo!

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? \_\_\_\_\_

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation):

Kaufman 2000

This report was made from notes made during \_\_\_\_\_ or after \_\_\_\_\_ observation, or later from memory \_\_\_\_\_.

Date of written report: 6-21-2001Reporting observer: Tom Shane Signature: Tom ShaneObserver's address: 1706 Belmont, Garden City, Kansas 67846

Send report to: Bill Lisowsky, 1059 Pleasant Hill Church Road, Cadiz, KY 42211

Rec'd 1/10/02 (2)

Vermilion Flycatcher

Pyrocephalus rubinus

May 28, 2001

Higbee Cemetery, appx. 25 miles so. of LaJunta, Hwy 109 Otero county

observed noonish - 10 min. by CFO group, pre-convention.

Distance 100-200'.

full sun, good exposure. (Pair has nested here in previous year(s) ).

Equip.: bino and Kowa scope

Hab./behavior: rural ranchland, small, vegetated cemetery with older cottonwood trees.

Pair flying about, perched on fence and tree branches. Male singing. Pair appeared to be in the process of setting up nest site. We kept our distance and minimized any disturbance.

Description: Male - crimson red from crown to undertail coverts, dark brown "mask" from lores to nape, joining dark brown mantle. Wings and tail dark brown; nervous tail flicks. Blackish primaries. Faint pale wing bars, edgings on secondaries. black legs.

Female - medium brown head with white supercilium, malar, chin, throat; dark lores and eyes, small pointed black bill. Medium brown mantle and wings, white wing bars and edgings on secondaries and greater s. coverts and tertials. black primaries. breast and upper belly white with brown streaks; lowerbelly and undertail coverts pinkish.

Vocal: male in flight, perched, but I failed to make note of tune.

No other species similar. Have seen VEFL many times.

Karleen Schofield  
33 Yates St.  
Denver, CO. 80219  
303-936-8661

Karleen Schofielddate: 5/30/01





First-year / **SY** ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher  
June 14, 2001 Higbee Cemetery  
Otero County, Colorado

Photo by Tom Shane  
Garden City, Kansas

Pentax MX w/ Sigma 600mm Mirror lens  
Kodak 200 print film

2001 Part 1 Vol 37/3  
July 2005  
COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM  
CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-30  
(A) 7-0  
NEW STATE RECORD \_\_\_\_\_ UNUSUAL RECORD X

**Species:** Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephala rubinus*)

**Date:** 22 & 26 April 2001 **Number seen:** 3 **Sex:** 2 male & 1 female **Plumage:** Basic

**Locality:** Higbee Cemetery & vicinity **Elevation:** ~4100'

**Nearest "town":** Higbee (S of La Junta) **County:** Otero

**Time observed:** ~06:35 (22<sup>nd</sup>), ~11:00 (26<sup>th</sup>) **Duration of observation:** ~5 mins & ~15 mins

**Description:** Larry and I went to the Higbee Cemetery to look for the Vermilion Flycatchers that had been found there previously in the spring. It took us a few minutes, but we found two displaying males, the first in the cemetery and to the west and south, the other to the east of the cemetery. At the end of the observation on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, I found and only briefly observed a female near the second male (E of the cemetery). On the 26<sup>th</sup>, I again visited the cemetery and easily found all three birds, the pair to the east of the cemetery and the apparently unmated male to the west and south. The paired male was actively flycatching and feeding his mate during my observation on the 26<sup>th</sup>, whereas, the unpaired male was actively displaying and singing and only flycatching for short periods during that observation.

The males were unmistakable, with red heads and red underparts. They each had a dark brown eyeline that was very thin in front of the eye and gradually widened through and behind the eye and connected broadly to the nape of the same color. The upperparts, tail, and wings were also the same dark brown and the tertials and many covert feathers were fringed narrowly with pale. The eyes, bill, and legs were dark/black. The red on the eastern (paired) male was entirely red, with only a slight paling of intensity in the vent and undertail coverts region. The western (unpaired) male paled noticeably from about mid-belly to the vent with the lower coloration being quite pinkish-orange. The displays of the two males were identical and involved a semi-hovering, exaggerated wingbeat flight, with the head held above horizontal, accompanied by the distinctive, somewhat twittering song.

The female was quite different in coloration, being a slightly paler and grayer brown (than her male) above and whitish below. I did not get very close to her, so didn't get much in the way of plumage detail. I did note that her auriculars were the darkest plumage on her head and that she had faint streaking on her whitish underparts and a strong wash of yellow on her flanks. I did not note the vent region coloration. The wings were the same color as the upperparts; I did not note the presence of any pale wing fringing. The tail was dark, about the same color as the back and I could just detect pale outer webs to the R6s.

Similar species eliminated by description: There really are no ID contenders for the male and the female is also quite distinctive. However, the underparts pattern easily rules out any other possibilities.

**Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):** the males gave a high-pitched twittering song that accelerated at the end



**What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species?** I have seen >75 Vermilions and 10s to 1000s of all regularly-occurring North American red birds.

**Light conditions:** clear both days with sun in various positions as I changed locations to watch birds

**Optical equipment used:** Swarovski 8.5x42, Leica 20-60x (usually between 25x & 40x)

**Distance, and how estimated:** estimated at ~35m at closest approach to eastern male and female; ~15m to western male

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Larry Semo (on the 22<sup>nd</sup>)

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** Dave Elwonger, Mark Janos, Brandon Percival, and many others

**If photographed, type of equipment and film:** not photographed

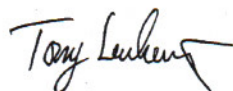
**List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:**

**a) at time of observation:** none

**b) after observation:** none

**Reporting observer:** Tony Leukering

**Signature:**



**Address:** Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark  
Brighton, CO 80601

Bunting Lane,

**Date report was written:** 29 April 2001 from memory and notes made on the afternoon of the 26th