

2002-58

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

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

ACCEPTED

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X: 2002-58

RESULTS:Species:(Common Name) **Vermilion Flycatcher**(Scientific Name) *Pyrocephalus rubinus*

Date(s) of occurrence: 5/11/02

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: M

Plumage: 1st Year Male

Exact location: Chico Basin Ranch

County: El Paso? (Close to Pueblo County Line?)

Nearest town: Hanover

Elevation: ~ 5100 feet

Length of observation: About 10 minutes

Time(s) of observation: Approx. 5 p.m.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Tony Leukering discovered the bird, and other participants in RMBO monitoring training observed the bird with me.

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Unknown at time of report.

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Bird was viewed in good light, with evening sun at my back.

Optical equipment used: Minox 8.5X42 binoculars, Nikon Coolpix 995 with 5X telephoto + 1.7X teleconverter

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): About 20 meters at closest

Was bird(s) photographed? Yes

If so, have you submitted photos? Yes (2 emailed to Tony Leukering)

Who took the photographs? Bill Schmoker

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: The bird was in a bushy tree and on a barbed-wire fence bordering short-grass, yucca, and cactus habitat.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): The bird was mainly perching in the tree and on the fence. A few flycatching forays were observed.

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): The amount of red on a small bird immediately brought Vermilion Flycatcher to mind. As seen in the photos, this bird has a red crown, throat, sides, breast, belly, and vent. The red is not as vivid as a full adult male, and is interspersed with faint gray, indicating a 1st year male. Additionally, the wings, back, and eye-stripe are gray instead of black, again indicating a 1st year bird. The gray appears to darken towards the tail. Two pale wing bars are visible on the bird. The bill is black, fairly short, straight, and pointed like other flycatchers. The legs and eye are also black. The bird was sparrow-sized.

Describe bird's call or song: Not heard.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: I can only think of a few other small North American birds showing this much red. A small escaped parrot with this much red would have a much different bill and would be larger, among other significant differences. Tanagers and Cardinals can be ruled out on the basis of size and by the dark back and eye-stripe, as well as bill differences. Red finches can be ruled out on bill shape and the dark back and eye-stripe. Red-faced Warbler can be ruled out by the red breast, sides, belly, and vent, as well as the different face pattern and wing bars. Painted Bunting has red underparts but no red on the top of the head, as well as bill and other plumage color differences. The red on Robins and Spotted Towhees is less vivid and they are much larger birds with other significant bill and plumage differences. Orioles don't show this shade of bright red are also much larger and have major bill differences, as well as much different plumage patterns.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I've observed Vermilion Flycatchers once before in Colorado at the Higbee Cemetery.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): The Sibley Guide to Birds.

This report is from photos and from notes made during and after observation.

Date of written report: 5/30/02

Signature:

Reporting observer: William P. Schmoker

Reporting Observer's Address: 2227 Canyon Blvd. #106

State: CO

Zip: 80302

City: Boulder

Phone: 303/541-9372 email: bill.schmoker@bvsd.k12.co.us



COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X**Species:** Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)**Date:** 11-18 May 2002 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** male **Plumage:** Basic**Locality:** south of Rose Pond, Chico Basin Ranch **Elevation:** ~5200'**Nearest town:** Hanover **County:** Pueblo**Time observed:** various times on three dates **Duration of observation:** ~9 minutes, off and on

Description: On the 11th, while a few of us that were taking part in Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's *Monitoring Colorado's Birds* training session were birding, Bill Schmoker noted a male Vermilion Flycatcher in the patch of shrubs and small trees south of the Rose Pond. Though the rest of us could not immediately find the thing, we eventually all got great looks at the bird as it foraged and sang in flight. I saw it the next day and then, again, the next weekend.

The bird was unmistakable, being mostly brownish-black above and bright scarlet below. It also had a scarlet crown and forehead and the brownish-black of the back and nape was connected to a long eyeline of the same color. The relatively short and thin bill was black as were the legs. The tail was black with a white outer webs to the outer pair of rectrices. The bird appeared about the same size as a Chipping Sparrow that I saw near it at one time.

Similar species eliminated: There really are no similar species, but male Scarlet Tanager is ruled out by the bird's size, bill shape and size, tail pattern, head pattern, upperparts coloration, and song behavior, to name a few features. Male Northern Cardinal is also eliminated on these features, in addition to many others.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): The song, often delivered in flight, was composed of relatively high and thin notes, initially as individual notes but then running into a trill at the end.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >100s of Vermilion Flycatchers, 100s of Scarlet Tanagers, and 1000s of Northern Cardinals.

Light conditions: various lighting at different times and on different dates

Optical equipment used: Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of ~3 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Bill Schmoker, Rich Levad, Nancy Gobris, many others

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

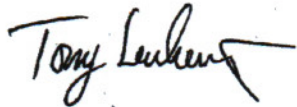
If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

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 Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: 17 January 2004 from memory