

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

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

Species: BLACK PHOEBE

(Vernacular Name)

SAYORNIS nigricans

(Scientific Name)

Date(s): Sunday March 31, 1991Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: _____

Plumage: _____

Locality: Fountain Creek Regional ParkElevation: 6,000 feetNearest town: Fountain, ColoradoCounty: El PasoTime(s) observed: 8³⁰am also at 12³⁰pm.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 1st about 3-4 minutes 8³⁰am 2nd about 5-10 minutes 12³⁰pm.

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

at 12³⁰pm. Elmer Willis: 540 Ashbury Place Colorado Springs CO 80906 303-634-5122
Richard Bunn: 2707 Main Street, Colorado Springs CO 80907 303-473-2710
 at 8³⁰am. Elsie & John Pope Colorado Springs CO

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

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Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Looking at the bird perched in full sun. Also in shade by the river and in full sun during later views.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): AVL Elite 8x42 and KOWA SCOPE TSN4 20mm lens.Distance, and how measured: [estimated] 20 yards, 10 yards more than 50 yards.If photographed, type of equipment and film: N/AWho else photographed the bird? N/A

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

It was flying out from its perch and back catching insects

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

I first saw this bird with its back to me about 20 yards away, perched at eye level. At that time all I noticed was a black back. Then it flew away from me, behind me and then perched on a branch about 10 yards away facing towards me. In my binoculars and with scope at 20x this is what I saw. A bird smaller than a Robin and Starling with:

A black head, a black eye, a thin black bill, a black throat and chest merging with a white belly and undertail coverts in this shape
The tail appeared rounded when perched and was pale grey on the underside.

Black legs and feet

Description (continued):

The bird called while perched. It also flew from the perch and back to catch small flying insects. Sometimes perched with front towards me sometimes with its back.

The back appeared as dark as the head. The wings were ~~pattern~~ lighter with pale brownish edges. There were 2 very pale wing bars.

The one difference in this bird compared to other Black Phoebe's I have seen was the absence of white on the outer tail feathers.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

From perch a high "cheet"

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

This bird was seen in old cotton woods edging Fountain Creek and a large pond (with marshy edges) to the East. Riparian habitat with trees budding but no leaves - branches essentially bare.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

A similar bird would be a dark-eyed Junco races: slate-colored, white-winged; Oregon. The OJ Junco has a pale bill which is a different shape than the one I saw on this bird. Also the dark-eyed Junco has pale legs and this bird had dark legs. Also this bird was much darker than dark-eyed Junco's and the shape between dark breast and pale belly does not appear on OJ Junco's. The Eastern Kingbird appears larger and lacks the black on throat and breast and has white band on end of tail.

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

Considerable experience with dark-eyed Junco's and Eastern Kingbirds. Passing knowledge of Black Phoebe (seen twice in Colorado) numerous times in Northern California along the coast.

When I first saw this bird I thought first Eastern Kingbird. Then it flew and landed facing me and it wasn't.

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

a) at time of observation: 1st observation I was alone. After the bird flew away (2 people & 2 dogs came down the path) a couple came down the path and asked me if I had just seen a different bird. We all said Black Phoebe together. Then

b) after observation: consulted National Geographic & Peterson (new) Western Birds. Then the bird returned and the three of us had superb views. I came home made some calls and Richard & Elinor and I went looking and found it again.

This report was written from reports made during X ^{on tape recorder}, after observation _____ from memory _____
Date and time report was written: Sunday March 31, 1991

Reporting observer: TONI BREVILLIER

Signature: Toni Brevillier

Address: 2616 Ashgrove St Colorado Springs CO 80906

719-540-5653

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
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DENVER, CO 80205