

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X: **2002-83**

RESULTS: **Accepted** **(A)**

Species:(Common Name): **Black Phoebe**

(Scientific Name) **Sayornis nigricans**

Date(s) of occurrence: **26 May, 2002**

Number of birds seen: **Two**

Sex: **Presumed male and female**

Plumage: **Adults**

Exact Location: **Piedra River upstream of Navajo Reservoir**

County: **Archuleta**

Nearest town: **Stollsteimer**

Elevation: **Roughly 6200 feet msl**

Length of observation: **Off and on over a roughly 25 minute span.**

Time(s) of observation: **Around noon**

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: **Tony Leukering, m.ob.**

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): **Rich Levad's tour group just prior to our arrival.**

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position): **Good. Mostly sunny. Birds were generally below the horizontal as we were positioned on a bridge over the river.**

Optical equipment used: **7X42 Zeiss Bins**

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): **Varied. Closest views were roughly 25 feet with maximum distance being approximately 150 feet.**

Was bird(s) photographed? **Yes, one poor quality digital shot**

If so, have you submitted photos? **Yes**

Who took the photographs? **Myself**

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: **Riparian vegetation along Piedra River. Vegetation consisted mainly of a narrow strip of cottonwood and tamarisk along the river with adjacent pinyon/juniper/Gambel's oak woodland on upland areas.**

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): **Both birds were observed actively foraging. Most behavior was associated with perching on woody debris adjacent to the river, though the bird occasionally forayed out for insects and were also observed in flight between perch locations.**

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):

Tony Leukering and I were leading a CFO convention field trip out of Durango on the above date. One of our stops was along the Piedra River, where we had hoped to meet up with Rich Levad's CFO field trip for lunch. Upon reaching the picnic area adjacent to the river, Rich Levad informed us of the presence of a Black Phoebe that was present near the bridge. It was soon thereafter that the group refound one of the phoebes and also observed a second. Both birds were very similar in appearance and were relatively small, being roughly 6 inches or so in total length. The birds had large, roundish heads and perched in an upright posture. The phoebes were wholly bicolored with black head, back, tail, and breast that contrasted with a white lower breast, vent, and undertail coverts. The birds would be seen perched on a small branch over the stream followed by occasional sallies in search of insects. While perched, both birds steadily pumped their tail. I was able to get some extremely poor video footage of one of the birds and a still shot from that video is presented below.



Describe bird's call or song: **I don't recall any vocalizations delivered by the subject birds during our visit.**

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **The small size (relatively), upright posture, large head, pumping tail motion, and behavior of sallying for insects indicated a member of the flycatcher family. The color combination eliminated all other flycatchers in North America.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **Have observed other birds in Colorado, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Mexico..**

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 **XXX** observation or later from memory

Date of written report: **10/3/02**

Reporting observer: **Larry Semo**

Signature:

Larry Semo

Reporting Observer's Address: **9054 Dover Street**

City: **Westminster**

State: **Colorado**

Zip: **80021**

Send report to:
Colorado Birds Record Committee
c/o Tony Leukering
XXXX
Brighton, CO, XXXXX

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 2002-83

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

(A)

Species: Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*)

Date: 24 & 26 May 2002

Number seen: one

Sex: ?

Plumage: Basic

Locality: Piedra Cr. at foot bridge at Navajo SRA

Elevation: ~6100'

Nearest town: Arboles

County: Archuleta

Time observed: mid-afternoon (24th); noon (26th)

Duration of observation: ~4 minutes

Description: While scouting for a field trip for the CFO convention in Durango, I checked out the Piedra Creek at Navajo SRA. I was about mid-span on the large foot bridge there when I heard the unmistakable call not of a Black Phoebe. I quickly located the bird and watched it for a bit. The bird flycaught (flycatched?) along the creek, making sallies from its perches on rocks or streamside vegetation. While perched, the bird often pumped its tail up and this movement had something of a sideways vector to it, too. I saw the bird on both the north and south sides of the foot bridge.

The bird was a medium-sized flycatcher whose entire head, back, rump, and chest were black. The belly was white. The eyes, bill, and legs were all dark. The primaries were somewhat browner than the blackish upper wing coverts. The longish tail was black, except for the outer webs to the R6 pair, which were white. At times, the bird exhibited a peaked crown typical of the genus.

Similar species eliminated: There are no particular ID contenders, though the bird's behavior, call, and precise plumage pattern eliminate the only remotely similar bird - Slate-colored Junco. Eastern Phoebe is also easily eliminated by plumage details.

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

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 100s of Black Phoebes and at least 100s of most (if not all) remotely similar North American species.

Light conditions: sun to my right (when looking south) and left (when looking north)

Optical equipment used: Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: closest estimated approach of about 8 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none on 24th; m.ob. on 26th

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Rich Levad and m.ob.

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

2002-83

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: Tony Leukering

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: Written on 14 January 2004 from field notes that I wrote at the time of the sighting on the first date