

Species: PURPLE FINCH Carpodacus purpureus
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 24-25, 1975 Time Bird Seen: 2 PM to 2:10 PM
Locality: Barr Lake
Nearest Town: Brighton County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:
None NAME ADDRESS TELEPHONE

Optical Equipment: 7 X 50 binoculars
If photographed, type of equipment used: _____
Light Conditions: sun shining on bird part of time, rest of time bird in open shade
Distance from bird (how measured): minimum estimated 25-30 feet

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Female or immature

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Bird was first seen hovering briefly in front of cottonwood twig, then flew into a low willow shrub (about 10' off the ground but about 5 feet below me as I was above the shrub), where it fed for several minutes. Bird then flew onto the lowest branches of a huge dead cottonwood tree, where it perched in shade for several minutes before flying off, at that point about 30 feet off the ground.

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

Crown and nape dark brown, with small darker streaks just barely visible. Back darkish brown, with a few indistinct paler streaks on the back. Wing brown, with some pale edgings, mostly small, some arranged into two weak, inconspicuous wingbars. Rump and tail not seen. Auricular area with a strongly and sharply defined dark brown patch. Strongly defined, white superciliary line, more pronounced posterior to the eye than anterior to it. Throat white, with a strong brownish malar stripe. Breast, sides, upper belly (as far as the legs) whitish, with a grayish-sandy wash, with numerous fairly wide, not strongly defined streaks. Belly and flanks (from legs back) and undertail coverts pure white, completely unmarked, contrasting in those 2 respects with the rest of the underparts. Bill short, thick, ~~not~~ color not noted specifically. Legs not described in my field notes.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

None(unfortunately)

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Cottonwood-willow growth bordering large irrigation reservoir on agricultural plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

House Finch-completely lacks any face pattern, generally different in appearance. Cassin's Finch-face pattern less sharply defined, crown and auricular area not as dark. Lacks strong malar stripe. Undertail coverts not white and unmarked (unmarked undertail coverts apparently diagnostic of Purple). Back darker (less whitish areas) in Purple than Cassin's.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen Purple (mostly females or immatures) several times in Michigan and California.
Have seen Cassin's a number of times in Colorado (including females, immatures).
Have seen House Finch very many times (all plumages).

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard field guides supported my identification with respect to face pattern, but they make no mention (one way or the other) of undertail coverts.

Bruce Webb of Boulder was talked to, he felt the bird that I described was a Purple, especially with respect to unmarked undertail coverts (which he said are diagnostic of P. This report was written from notes made during x after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Robert Andrews SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: Nov 3, 1975
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