

Rec'd 9/28/99 up

(5 photos)

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

ACCEPT 7-0

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

Species: Pyrrhuloxia (Vernacular Name) Cardinalis sinuatus (Scientific Name)Date(s): April 29, 1999 and April 30, 1999Number of birds seen: One Sex: Male Plumage: AdultLocality: 1/4 mile NE of intersection of Highways 160 and 172 Elevation: About 7,200 feetNearest town: Durango County: La PlataTime(s) observed: On 4/29/99 - 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and on 4/30/99 - 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): During observation the bird would come and go several times and each visit was usually only a few seconds long. On one occasion he may have stayed about a minute.
Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

David Robillard 60 Cottonwood Circle; C.R. 234-A; Durango, CO 81301 (970) 247-7926

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

None that I know of.

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light): 4/29/99 was overcast. 4/30/99 was mostly sunny, however, by late afternoon clouds had started to move in. The sun did shine from the west under the clouds and through the trees for a few minutes during my sighting. The bird was only in the direct sunlight once for 5 - 10 seconds.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Binoculars - Tasco 7 x 35mmDistance, and how measured: 10 - 25 feet - ApproximatedIf photographed, type of equipment and film: Vivitar Series II - Auto Focus and Power Zoom; Fuji 200
Conditions for taking photographs were very poor.Who else photographed the bird? I know of no one else at this time.Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): I observed the bird on both occasions while he was eating at my feeding station. On 4/29/99 he seemed somewhat timid. He ate seeds from the ground while staying close to the base of a tree. On 4/30/99 he was more aggressive. He again ate from the ground but was willing to risk moving away from the tree. He also competed with other birds to eat at a hanging platform feeder and a tube feeder with a saucer attached to the bottom.

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 observed in the field:

What first caught my eye was his red breast. It was bright and was a different color than a Robin. The Pyrrhuloxia's breast was a prettier red without as much orange as a Robin. When he turned sideways, I immediately noticed that he was mostly grey and had a crest. I also noticed that he had a short yellow bill. As he was getting ready to fly away, I noticed something weird about the crest. While he was gone, I started looking through my Stokes Field Guide for a grey bird with a crest, a red breast, and a short yellow bill. The only bird I could find in the book that fit that description was the male Pyrrhuloxia. When I noticed its range, I thought I must not have seen right. When it came back a few minutes later, I looked at it through my binoculars. I had seen right! I was also able at that time to see the red "mask" on his face and identify the red

Description (continued):

on the tip of his crest. It was the red on the tip of his crest that had made it look weird during my first observation. It may have been the lighting, but the red on his face and on the tip of his crest looked like a deeper shade of red than what was on his breast. Since he was down in the grass I was unable to identify any red on his wings or tail. But when he flew away there was a bright flash of red. On 4/30/99 while he was up on my hanging platform feeder, I looked at him again through my binoculars. He was about the size of a Grosbeak but had a longer tail and I was finally able to identify the red markings on his wing and his tail. It was about that time that a shaft of sunlight hit him. It was incredible! All of the red areas just seemed to light up and glow! A very impressive sight!

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

While he was at my feeding station all he did was eat. I never heard a song or call.

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

My feeding station is set up under a juniper tree. Although my piece of property has a lot of trees (juniper, pinon, oak brush, etc.), much of the surrounding area is open land used for grazing.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

I eliminated other species as I was unable to find another bird that was grey with a crest, had a red breast, and a short yellow bill. The only other bird that even slightly resembled what I was seeing was a female Cardinal. But I was quickly able to eliminate that because the female Cardinal doesn't have a red breast. And none of the other crested birds had a short yellow bill.

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

The only other crested bird I have seen was a Plain Titmouse.

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

a) **at time of observation:** Stokes Field Guide to Birds - Western Region by Donald and Lillian Stokes and Golden Field Guide - Birds of North America by Robbins, Bruun, Zim and Singer

b) **after observation:** On 5/3/99 I called Pam at For the Birds. She suggested I call Kip Stransky at the Division of Wildlife. I called him and described what I had seen. Neither individual influenced my identification. However, based on my description, Kip thought my identification was accurate.

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation X from memory X

Date and time report was written: May 6, 1999 10:00 a.m.

Reporting observer: Diana Robillard

Signature: Diana Robillard

Address: 60 Cottonwood Circle; C.R. 234-A; Durango, CO 81301

Return to:

Bill Prather

C.F.O. Official Records Committee

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Additional Comments: On the same day and within a few minutes after sighting the Pyrrhuloxia, I also noticed a Black-headed Grosbeak. It was the first one I had seen this year. On 5/3/99 I realized that I hadn't seen the Grosbeak since 4/30/99 either. I thought it might be possible that the two birds were traveling together.