

CFO-ORC FILE # 33-94-43*Accepted*

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

1X1

UNUSUAL RECORD

11

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

Species: ACORN WOODPECKER Melanerpes formicivorus  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): July 20, 1994 Aug 2, 1994Number of birds seen: 4 Sex: 2 males  
2 unknown Plumage: AdultLocality: Lake Dorothy State Wildlife Area Elevation: 7740Nearest town: Raton N.M. - Trinidad CO County: Las AnimasTime(s) observed: 7/20 - 3:30 P.M. 8/2 - 10:30 A.M. to 2 P.M.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 7/20 - 5 min 8/2 - 3 hours

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

Pearle Sandstrom 2823 5th Ave Pueblo, 81008Clif Smith (719) 543-6427

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

Hopefully the rest of the Birding board

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

Sunny day - midday sun behind & above observersOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Swift Multicon 8.3x44 ED Celestron Super C-9  
101Distance, and how measured: Est. by tree height - 40 to 100 ftIf photographed, type of equipment and film: Clif Smith - Pentax SLR K1000 500 MM lens PVS  
101Who else photographed the bird? Pearle Sandstrom Pentax MV 70-210 MM Lens  
Film Fuji 400 ASA

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

Undulating flight - not as undulating as a Flicker flight  
Feeding - like a flycatcher - perched on limb - flew out - caught insect - returned to  
same perch. Pecking was erratic - not patterned.The birds would often perch at the tops of dead ponderosa  
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:See Separate Sheet

Description (continued):

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

A repeated two note chatter - only when other Acorn woodpeckers were near - one would call in flight the others would answer

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

Scrub Oak - with large live + many dead Ponderosa pines edging + over the oak.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

The white faced wood pecker does not have the white rump - or as much red on the crown or - the white Iris or the black around the eye or the white belly + streaked flanks

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

None.

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

- a) at time of observation: Audubon Master Guide to Birding  
Peterson's Western Guide - mis influenced my identification on initial sig
- b) after observation:  
For behavior information - not I.D. purposes - The Audubon Encyclopedia  
of N. America Birds + Birds of America by T. Gilbert Pearson + Bent

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

Date and time report was written: 8/4/94 10. A.M.

Reporting observer: Mark Wagner Signature: Mark Wagner

Address: 221 S. Union  
Pueblo, CO 81003

Return to:  
Bill Prather  
C.F.O. Official Records Committee  
13810 WCR 1  
Longmont, Colorado 80504

33-94-43

The birds were 8 to 9 inches long  
larger than the Red Naped Sapsuckers  
near them



white rump  
visible in flight also

The white on the primaries  
was only visible to me when  
the bird was in flight.  
It also appeared more exten-  
sive than in some field guides.  
It was visible from the top  
and bottom of the wings

Expansive bright red crown  
extending onto the nape

The white forehead & chin  
appeared more extensive than in  
some field guides

Conical wood pecker  
bill - bordered  
by black feathers

black around  
eye

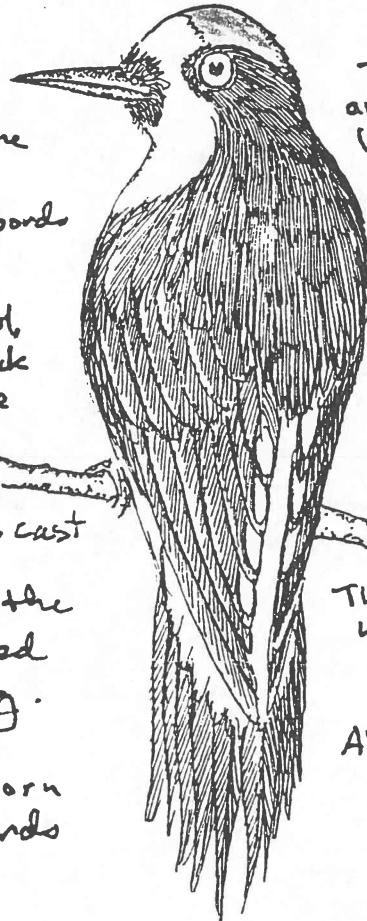
White iris giving the  
bird a goggle eye  
appearance (Pearle's words  
at the time)

In one case I saw  
yellow at the bottom of  
the chin near the black  
bill. In another case  
when the bird was in  
shadow the white  
chin & forehead  
took on a yellow cast

streaked flanks & the  
bill became streaked  
onto the white belly.

white undertail coverts

one bird had particularly worn  
tail feathers - The other birds  
were newer looking



The nape, black  
around eye and  
back were  
blue-black  
iridescent  
contrasting with  
non iridescent  
black wing feathers

The secondaries  
had white spots  
on them

The rump  
was white

All black tail

33-94-43  
Accepted

## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

ACORN WOODPECKER  
Melanerpes formicivorus

Location: Lake Dorothy State Wildlife Area; north of Raton, N.M.; Las Animas County, Colorado

Date: August 3, 1994; September 3, 1994

This bird was discovered by Mark Yaeger and was seen by scores of other Colorado birders.

Setting:

Lake Dorothy is a small steep-sided canyon draining into New Mexico. It contains a few small lakes and a stream in the bottom. Vegetation consists of large Ponderosa Pines and other shrubs and trees (Mountain Mahogany, New Mexico Locust) and quite a bit of open grassy meadows. The birds frequented the largest, most conspicuous dead Ponderosa pines. I found 4 individuals on August 3 and only saw one on September 3. In August I watched the birds in heavy overcast and spitting rain with my binoculars but I was very close. At one point I was within 10 feet of one of the birds. In September the sky also heavily overcast and it was cold. I only got a very brief binocular view of a single bird perched at the very tip of a dead Ponderosa Pine at least 400 yards away. On the August day the four birds stayed close together and called back and forth using soft "chucking" contact calls. They climbed through the dead branches of a Ponderosa until they all perched right at the top, all within body length distance of each other. I was never able to determine for sure if any of the birds were young as they appeared quite similar, but at least one was an adult male (red crown) and one was an adult female (red nape; black fore-crown). The four did seem to be a family group.

Description:

The birds were unmistakable. They were medium-sized woodpeckers, comparable to sapsuckers in size but smaller than flickers. They had long, dark, chisel shaped bills and crept up the tree trunks vertically using short legs and strong feet. They had a glaring, showy harlequin look. They had either a red, or black and red, crown. The face was white with a black eye patch. Throat was white, breast black and belly white with heavy black streaks. The birds were gleaming black above with a white spot in the otherwise plain black wing. In flight the birds were striking and showed a black back, white rump and black tail. The small white spot in the folded wing was actually a very obvious white patch in the spread wing. The iris was white or pale white.

Similar Species:

No woodpecker is really at all similar. If nothing else, the bold pattern and the white iris rule out all other species.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all north American woodpeckers and have seen many Acorn Woodpeckers in California, Arizona, New Mexico and west Texas.

This report is prepared from notes made during observation.

Mark Janos  
10 Sedum Ct.  
Pueblo, CO 81001

*Mark Janos*

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*accepted*

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD



UNUSUAL RECORD



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

Species: ACORN WOODPECKER | MELANERPES FORMICIVORUS  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s): SEPTEMBER 4th 1994

Number of birds seen: 2 Sex: PRESUMED PAIR Plumage: ADULT

Locality: NW OF LAKE DOROTHEY STATE WILDLIFE AREA Elevation: 7000' GUESS

Nearest town: RATON NM County: LAS ANIMAS

Time(s) observed: 8:30 am & 9:30 - 9:50 am

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): BRIEFLY FIRST, THEN FOR 20 MINUTES

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

Vic. ZERBI, GLENWOOD SPRINGS

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

MANY

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

MOSTLY SUNNY WITH SCATTERED CLOUDS

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): BINOCULARS 10x

Distance, and how measured: 40 YDS AT CLOSEST, GUESS

If photographed, type of equipment and film: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else photographed the bird? \_\_\_\_\_

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

FIRST FOUND ON DEAD TREE, THEN FLEW TO OTHER LIVING PONDEROSA PINES.

THE PAIR INTERACTED STRONGLY AND WERE BASICALLY FORAGING TOGETHER.

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:

MEDIUM SIZE WOODPECKER - SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN DOWNY AND A LITTLE SMALLER

THAN Hairy WOODPECKER. IN FLIGHT THEY WERE VERY DISTINCTIVE WITH THE

WHITE WING PATCHES AT THE BASE OF THE PRIMARIES AND THE LARGE WHITE RUMP PATCH

Description (continued):

AT REST THE FACE PATTERN WAS STRIKING WITH THE LIGHT EYE, RED CAP AND THE WHITE TO YELLOWISH AREA COMPLETELY SURROUNDING THE DARK BILL AND BLACK CHIN. BOTH BIRDS HAD A BLACKISH BREAST BAND AND VERY CONSPICUOUS STREAKING ALL DOWN THEIR FLANKS. THE UPPER PARTS OF THE BIRDS WAS MOSTLY BLACK EXCEPT FOR THE SMALL PATCHES OF WHITE FROM THE UPPER RUMP AND PRIMARIES THAT SHOW AT REST.

THE BILLS AND FEET WERE DARK.

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

WE RELOCATED THESE BIRDS BY THEIR CALLS TO ONE ANOTHER. IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE, BUT IT WAS CERTAINLY DIFFERENT FROM THE USUAL COLORADO WOODPECKERS.

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

DEAD AND LIVING POWDEROSA PINES, BUT THERE ARE EXTENSIVE OAK GROVES VERY CLOSE.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

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

NO OTHER WOODPECKER HAS THIS COMBINATION OF FACE PATTERN, WHITE RUMP AND PRIMARY PATCHES. THIS ELIMINATES RED-HEADED, WHITE-HEADED, WILLIAMSON'S SAPPECKER, DOWNY & Hairy WOODPECKERS. I AM VERY FAMILIAR WITH THESE WOODPECKER SPECIES LIST BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS, RECORDINGS, OTHER BIRDERS, ETC. CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION:

a) at time of observation: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC GUIDE

b) after observation:

This report was written from reports made during \_\_\_\_\_, after observation X from memory \_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time report was written: SEPTEMBER 10th, 1994

Reporting observer: PETER R. GENT Signature: Peter R. Gent

Address: 55 S 35th ST, BOULDER, CO 80303

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

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