

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD \_\_\_\_\_

UNUSUAL RECORD X

CFO-ORC FILE # 1998-86

ACCEPTED (7-0)

✓ rec'd 9-28-98

**Species:** Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

**Date:** 13 June 1998

**Number seen:** one

**Sex:** M

**Plumage:** Basic

**Locality:** 142 Rd., W of Durango

**Elevation:** about 7500'

**Nearest town:** Durango

**County:** La Plata

**Time observed:** late morning

**Duration of observation:** about 5 minutes

**Description:** After conducting the Animas BBS route, my assistant (Sue Bonfield) and I went to check on the resident Acorn Woodpeckers in Durango. We got to the site at which I'd seen them twice before (1995 and 1996) and soon found the male on a power pole right outside the vehicle. It was a strongly-patterned woodpecker, mostly black and white (duh!). The bill was dark with the base thereof encircled by black feathering. Posterior to the black around the bill was white that completely encircled the black, running under the eye/cheek patch (which was black), and connecting to the white throat and upper breast. The crown was red, with the red abutting the white that encircled the bill-encircling black. The black eye/cheek patch was connected to the black nape and thence to the black back. The lower back and rump were white. The tail and wings were black with the wings having an obvious white patch at the base of the primaries. The position the bird was in precluded seeing the underparts at all well, but when the bird flew away from us, I could see that at least the undertail coverts were white. The legs were dark. The eyes were whitish-yellow.

I first observed this (?) bird and a female on 10 June 1995. My field notes simply say that I observed male and female Acorn Woodpeckers (one of each) at this site. I remember, however, that I specifically tried to sex the birds and noted the following head patterns: bird #1 -- crown red, white forecrown bar, black encircling bill base, pale eyes surrounded by black, white in malar region; bird #2 -- head pattern similar to that of bird #1, but with black patch separating red rear crown from white forecrown bar; with that black connected to the black surrounding the eyes. I saw the female again on 4 June 1996 at the same site, which is on 142 Rd. near its eastern (dead-end) terminus and uphill from US 160 that runs along Lightner Creek at that point, west of Durango.

Similar species eliminated: There isn't particularly a species with which to confuse Acorn Woodpecker (though, a White-headed Woodpecker flying away is awfully similar). The head pattern of Acorn Woodpecker is distinctive.

**Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):** In 1995, I heard both birds giving the typical, somewhat-nasal "wheck-a-wheck-a-wheck-a-wheck" calls quite a few times. I heard the female give the same call once in 1996, but did not hear the male call in 1998.

**What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species?** I have seen 100s of Acorn Woodpeckers.

**Light conditions:** sun overhead in 1998; sun high and behind in 1995; no notes on the sun in 1996

**Optical equipment used:** Zeiss 7x42 (Leitz 10x40 in 1995)

**Distance, and how estimated:** estimated at about 15 feet in 1998; 75-350 feet in 1995; 100 feet in 1996

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Sue Bonfield (in 1998); Kip Stransky (in 1995); Brian Sullivan (in 1996)

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** Many, including Kip Stransky (numerous times since 1994), Scott Hutchings, Brian Sullivan, Doug Faulkner, Brandon Percival, Chris Wood.

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

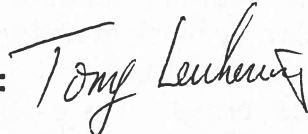
**List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:**

**a) at time of observation:** none

**b) after observation:** none

**Reporting observer:** Tony Leukering

**Signature:**



**Address:** Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

**Date report was written:** I wrote this from field notes (taken at the time) and memory on 20 September 1998.