

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Rec'd 11/08/01 (R)

Species: Acorn Woodpecker

Number: 2

Location: west of Pagosa Springs, Archuleta Co., Colorado

Habitat: open pine woodlands

Date: 10 June 2001

Time: 1:30-1:40 p.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird(s): G. Gordon Brown

Description of bird(s): We were driving east towards Pagosa Springs along Highway 160 when Gordon spotted a flying woodpecker with a white rump and white wing patches. We pulled onto the shoulder of the highway to study the bird. We quickly located the bird perched atop a large pine tree, where a second bird soon joined it. We studied both birds there for ten minutes before departing.

The general shape, size, and behavior (perching on the vertical segment of a tree) identified the birds as woodpeckers. Size was hard to judge, but they were clearly medium-sized woodpeckers, larger than a Downy Woodpecker but smaller than a nearby Northern Flicker. We both immediately recognized them as Acorn Woodpeckers, a species each of us was familiar with. The head pattern was the most striking feature: both birds had a red crown (making them males), a white forehead and chin, a black ring around the base of the bill, and black on the remainder of the head. This appearance matched the "clown" appearance often ascribed to this species. The bill was black with a short, stout appearance. The remaining underparts were mostly white with a black bib (fading to fine black streaking posteriorly) on the upper breast. The upperparts and tail were black and contrasted with the white rump (visible when the birds sallied from the treetop). The wings were also black with white bases to the primaries forming a noticeable white wing patch, visible in flight and while the birds were perched.

Similar species and how eliminated: The combination of size, distinctive head pattern, pattern of black on the underparts, and white rump and wing patches eliminates all other woodpeckers.

Previous experience with species: I have seen numerous Acorn Woodpeckers in the Southwest and a few as far north as southern Oregon. I am very familiar with other *Melanerpes*, especially Lewis's Woodpecker.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with clear skies and the sun directly behind us. Estimated viewing distance was 75-100m. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes written? none written

How long before this form completed? form completed on 13 June 2001