

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

52-89-47

Species: Louisiana Waterthrush
(Vernacular name)

Seiurus motacilla
(Scientific name)

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If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 6 Sept 1989 Time Bird Seen: 13:30 to Watched for ~ 30 secs in clear view.

Locality: Burchfield Lake State Wildlife Area ; ~2 miles W. of Kansas border
Walsh Colo. is ~11 miles west Baca County
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binocs.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: — Plumage: ad. breeding

Light conditions: Very good; In bright diffuse shade; Sunny above

Distance from bird, and how measured: 25 feet estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

I was fishing & whistling a Pygmy Owl song when the bird flew up to me, chirping loudly 2-3 times. It landed on the wet mud along a flowing seep, walked along, bobbing its tail constantly. It stayed on the ground, then walked onto a little jumble of sticks, went around the back & disappeared.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

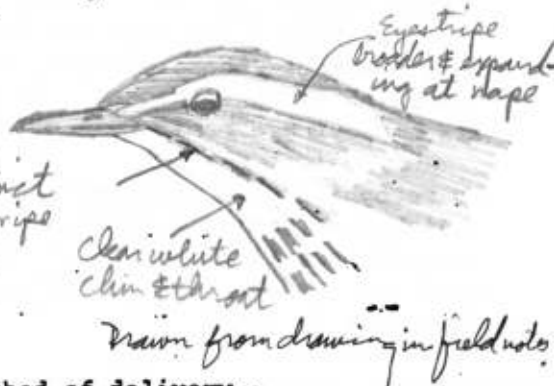
Willow & deciduous thicket. Small trees, loose underbrush, along wet seep draining Burchfield "Lake". Small trickle of water running through mud & sand drainage. Brushy tangles left by higher water are scattered throughout.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

None

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

A small slender warbler about 6" long. Uppersides, including tail, back, wings and crown were a dull, dark brownish-gray. No wing bars or crown markings. Undersides and eyeline were a clear, bright white. Undersides were marked by rows of brownish spots. Chin and throat were clear unmarked white, with no speckling or barring. Eyeline is broad & arching over eye, extending clear back to nape, with a wide broadening shape as it extended down & behind eye. There was a thin indistinct whisker mark at side of throat formed by streaks. Eye black. Bill dark. L. eye long & pinkish.



Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Only sound heard was a loud, ringing chip given 2 or 3 times

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Things I did not note on this bird: 1) I saw no color on flanks other than gleaming white. I think light was good enough to detect this, if present. 2) I did not note bill to be particularly long or stout 3) I did see undertail coverts.

Ovenbird lacks eye-stripe, has eye-ring & crown markings. Most N. Waterthrushes are yellower underneath although some have a clear white ground color. The two major differences: N. Waterthrush should have at least speckling on throat, or even heavy streaks. Superciliary is narrower behind eye & does not expand broadly, extending to nape as in the observed bird.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

- I have seen many N. Waterthrushes in spring & fall, in west & east; and also saw 2 this same day, previous to described bird.
- I saw several Louisiana Waterthrushes in Illinois & Texas, in 1978-1982.

This report was written from notes made during ___ after ___ observation; from memory ___.

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Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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