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COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☐

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

Species: Phainopepla | Phainopepla nitens
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): 16 Sept, 17 Sept, 18 Sept 1978Number of birds seen: OneSex: ♂Plumage: MoultingLocality: WellingtonElevation: ~ 5000Nearest town: WellingtonCounty: LarimerTime(s) observed: 1845. on 16 Sept.; several times 17 Sept.; 0915 18 SeptDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) up to 20 min. at a time

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

- 17 Sept. Charles Chase II 825 E. Laurel, Fort Collins, Colo. 80524
 Dr. Ronald Ryder, Dept. of Fishery and Wildlife Bid., Colo. State Univ., Fort Collins 80523
 18 Sept. Edward Hollowed 115 Garfield Fort Collins, Colo. 80521

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

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

Has been seen under every type of light conditionsOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): First sighting: Kalimar 7x35 Wide angleDistance, and how measured: Has been seen at distances as close as 4 m (estimated)If photographed, type of equipment and film: Honeywell Pentax Spotmatic / Tamron 300mm; Tri-XWho else photographed the bird? Charles Chase II

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

First seen flying into Russian olive; Flycatcher-like flight. The bird has since been seen to travel between the olive and a nearby Elderberry, where it feeds on berries. In addition, it favors exposed perches such as dead elms, T.V. antennas, and wires. When active, the bird twitches its tail and crest.

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:

The bird is similar in size to a waxwing or western tanager but has more the body proportions of a Townsend's solitaire (slim build, long tail). These three species were available for comparison in the same yard. When I first saw the bird, the crest was conspicuous, more erect and longer than a waxwing's. The light was poor on the night of the first sighting, and the bird appeared to be a uniform gray-brown with inconspicuous wing bars. I thought the bird was a ♀ at the time. Excellent conditions the next day (17 Sept) allowed closer observation of plumage characteristics. The bird appears to be a male acquiring the adult plumage. Black feathers are most notable on the upper breast, along the flanks, and on the crest. Where they are coming in, these feathers give an overall plumage pattern similar to a starling. In flight, the bird can be seen to have gray-white patches in the primaries and relatively long tail. Perched, the crest is prominent, and at close range the bird can be seen to have red eyes and a thin pointed bill. The crest is somewhat ragged; the longest feathers near the

Description, (continued) Forehead standing erect but the rest having a generally "thinned" appearance. When perched the folded wings are lighter than the rest of the back and tail, appearing light gray brown. Darker gray-brown with the aforementioned black "mottling" is the overall plumage color.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): The bird issues fairly regular call notes, a single slurred whistle rising slightly in pitch. The call is usually given while perched but I believe the bird has called a few times in flight as well (not sure).

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: Suburban yards; more specifically deciduous trees including Chinese elm, elderberry, Ribes sp., Russian olive. Decided preference for fruit bearing vegetation and dead limbs in elm.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Townsend's Solitaire - no crest, eye ring, white edges on tail.

Cedar Waxwing - short tail tipped in yellow, black and white "mask"

The only other crested species are the jays, which each have blue in the plumage; the smaller, gray titmice; and conical billed birds with red in the plumage (Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia)

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

I have seen a few individuals of this species in Arizona, and am well acquainted with all the above mentioned similar species.

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

a) at time of observation:

b) after observation: Robbins, Brown, and Zim. Birds of North America; Peterson, Field Guide to the birds of Texas; Udvardy, The Audubon Society field guide to North American birds, western region. All references and other observers support the I.D.

This report was written from notes made during _____, after _____ observation; from memory ☒.

Date and time report was written: 0800. 19 Sept. [my apologies for the smeared ink!]

Reporting observer: Daniel C. Butler

Signature: Daniel C. Butler

Address: 7514 N.E. Frontage Rd., Wellington, Colo. 80549

Butler 568-7607

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below.

Charlie

221-5831

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
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