

26-73-79
Accepted
JR 10/9/73

220 31st St.
Boulder, CO 80303

Mr. Jack Reddall, Chairman
CFO Official Records Committee
4450 S. Alton St.
Englewood, CO 80110

Dear Jack,

I saw a black-billed cuckoo on the western slope, and thought you would be interested. Below is verifying documentation of an unusual record for your consideration.

1. Species: Black-billed Cuckoo; *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. 2. Number 1.
3. Location: Colorado River bottom, 3 mi. ESE of Kremmling, Colorado.
4. Date: June 30, 1973. 5. Time bird seen: About 10 a.m. for 2-3 minutes.
6. Description of what was seen in the field: Soft-brown bird, white underside, recognized immediately as a cuckoo, lit on a limb of a small tree in a willow thicket. I had evidently walked too close to a song sparrow's nest, and quite a commotion was going on. My first thought was to check the field marks to see if the bird was a yellow-billed or black-billed. Without the benefit of binoculars, I could see the black bill, the red eye-ring and small tail spots. I raised my binoculars, and could see the red eye-ring even more distinctly, and it was brilliant. The tail spots were muted, not distinct as in the yellow-billed.
7. Voice: Not heard. Although we were in the same camping spot for almost 24 hours after this sighting, the bird was not heard nor seen again.
8. Description of behavior: Secretive; bird lit on limb; stayed for a few minutes; then silently departed. Brush too thick for me to follow.
9. Habitat: General: River bottom traversing hay fields.
Specific: Willow thicket on bank of river. About 40-50' from the willows was a stand of narrow-leaf cottonwood trees.
10. Similarly appearing species: Yellow-billed cuckoo. The yellow-billed cuckoo is one of the first birds I identified in the field with no assistance, so it has always been a favorite of mine. I observed the black-billed once previously when a pair nested at the Sullivan ranch near Boulder in June, 1966.
11. Distance (how measured): 15 feet (estimate); about as close as I can view a bird through my binoculars.
12. Optical equipment: 7x50 Bushnells. ^{left}
13. Light: Open shade; sun to the right of observer over willows.
14. Previous experience with this and similarly appearing species: See 10 above. I have observed the yellow-billed cuckoo many times in Texas and a few in Colorado.
15. I thought this species was rare because I had seen it only once in Boulder (near).
- 16., 17., and 18. There were no other observers. My husband was after that big brown trout (about 20 inches).
19. I consulted North American Birds, Peterson's Guide to the Birds of Texas, Davis' Birds of Western Colorado, and Birds of Colorado by Niedrach and Bailey.

Sincerely,

Robbie

Robbie M. Elliott
220 31st.
Boulder, CO 80303

July 8, 1973