

24-1985

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Vaux's Swift

Scientific Name: Chaetura vauxi

Date: May 13, 1985 Time: 9:00 am

Length of time observed: 30 minutes

Number: one Age: ?

Sex: ?

Location: Grafton Sewage Pond, Utah

Latilong: Elevation (if known):?

Distance to bird: as little as 10 yards at times Light conditions: good, in open on clear day

Optical equipment: 8X40 Bushnell Explorer Binocs

Weather: Clear, cloudless morning with no wind. There had been some isolated thunder storms on the afternoon before.

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

I saw the bird fly for about 30 minutes between the ponds and the cottonwood trees along the river. It spend most of its time over the open field, around the trees and little time over the ponds. It flew from 5' to 35' above the ground. It did not associate with the White-throated Swifts which were flying over the adjacent pond. The bird had the basic swift-like body style with the cigar-like body and the long wings curved back and longer than the body. It flew with the twinkling flight without rocking.. It rarely fanned its tail except when making sharp turns. The tail was short, cut across, without a fork. The wing was basicly dark on top and bottom. The body was a dark brown with the top of the head darker than the rest of the body. The throat, upper breast and lower back were a lighter gray brown than the rest of the body but not white as the white on the white-throated swifts.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: No sounds

Behavior: Always in flight "hawking" for insects.

Habitat: open area between the ponds and the Cottonwood trees along the river.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

White-throated Swift <sup>was</sup> flying on the next pond so I could make the comparison. My bird did not have the black and white pattern of the white-throated swift plus the tail was not so forked. It did not rock like the Chimney Swift.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have seen many Vaux's Swifts in California where I grew up. They were a common sighting in Humboldt County where I studied birds as a student at Humboldt State.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:


This description is right from my notes taken while observing the bird. I referred to The National Geographic Bird Guide while observing the bird.

Significance of record in this area or the state: This bird is considered a rare bird in migration in Utah. This sighting is supportive of the other sighting records for Utah.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting x notes made later      from memory     

Observer: Clyde A. Morris

Signature: 

Address: 658 E. 1700 S. Apt. B  
SLC, UT 84105

Other observers who independently identified this bird: None

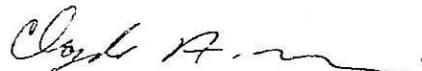
Date prepared: September 11, 1985

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen  
3868 Marsha Drive  
West Valley City, Utah 84120

VAUX'S SWIFT  
GRAFTON SEWAGE POND  
May 13, 1985

On May 13, 1985, I saw one Vaux's Swift flying at the Grafton Sewage Pond from 9:00 to 9:30 AM. The bird spent most of its time flying between the pond and the Cottonwood trees along the river. It did not associate with the White-throated Swifts which were flying above the adjacent pond and the river. The bird flew from 15' to 35' off the ground. There was no rocking as you would normally find in Chimney Swifts. The bird flew in the normal "twinkle" flight of the swifts. The bird would stop twinkling when it made a sharp turn. The tail was rarely fanned except when it turned. The tail was cut straight across with no forking.

The bird had the long, thin swift-like body with long thin wings. The wings were basically dark brown on both the top and bottom. The body was dark brown with the top of the head being even darker. The throat, upper breast, and lower back were lighter gray. There was no evidence of the white markings of the White-throated Swifts.



Clyde A. Morris  
658 E. 1700 S. Apt B  
Salt Lake City, UT 84105  
801/484-8156