

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Black-tailed gnatcatcher

Scientific Name: Poliophtila melanura

Date: Jan. 19, 1986 Time:

Length of time observed: about 1.5 minutes

Number: one Age: ?

Sex: ?

Location: Beaver Dam Wash just north of the cattleguard nearest the Lytle Ranch headquarters

Latilong: 19

Elevation (if known): ?

Distance to bird: about 10 feet

Light conditions: excellent

Optical equipment: Bushnell 8X40 and Bushnell 7X35

Weather: clear and warm

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

Small, slender bird, basically whitish below and gray above. Bill long and thin as is the tail. Tail black above and below except for white outer tail feathers and white tips of the tail feathers below as observed on the underside of the tail. We had excellent views of the white contrasting with the black underside of the tail. We had time to look it up in the guide and compare the guide's drawing with the bird.

The bird did not have a black head, but being that it was not the breeding season this did not help determine if the bird was male or female.

We do not remember seeing or not seeing the brownish color to the wing.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: do not remember.

Behavior: Quick, active bird moving about the tree and surrounding brush.
Held its tail cocked at an angle to the body as blue-gray gnatcatchers do.
Bird appeared to respond to pishing or the Crissal/Thrasher call which was being played.

Habitat: typical Mojave desert vegetation.

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

Blue-gray gnatcatcher considered but ruled out because the underside of the tail was almost wholly black with just the edges and tips white. We looked for and saw this fieldmark very well. We commented on how well this characteristic was seen.

Black-capped gnatcatcher are not to be expected in Utah. They also have much less black on the underside of the tail than the bird we observed.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

Between the two observers,, have seen the black-tailed gnatcatcher several times; once at Beaver Dam Wash in the spring of 1985, once at Big Bend Park, TX in the spring of '76 and at least once in Arizona in '82. Both observers have seen the blue-gray gnatcatcher many times throughout the west.

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

At the time of the sighting we compared the bird to the National Geographic Guide. Later we consulted the Audubon Master Guide. For Utah status we consulted with Steve Hedges and Ella Sorenson.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

First winter record for Utah

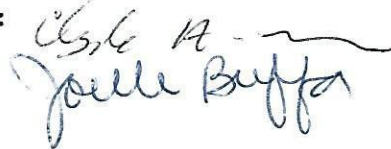
Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting _____ notes made later _____ from memory X

Observer: Clyde A. Morris--Joelle Buffa

Signature:

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



Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Jor Lee and Gary the caretaker of the ranch.

Date prepared: Feb. 11, 1986

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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