

1-1992

1-1992

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Scientific Name: Tyrannus forficatus

Date: July 1, 1992

Time: ~ 8:30 AM

Length of time observed: ~ 1 hour

Number: 1

Age: ?, AT least
1 year

Sex: ?

Location: Discovered by Bryan & Nancy Williams in their backyard; 288 W 725 N
LOGAN. SEC. 28 T12N R1E. I was the first who came to view it.

Lat/long: 3

Elevation (if known): ~ 4430

Distance to bird: closest 15 yds.

Light conditions: overcast, misty, light rain

Optical equipment: Zeiss 10x40 binoculars, 20 power Bushnell spotting scope
Photos with 600mm Sigma mirror lens and Canon T-70 camera

Weather: overcast, misty, light rain

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

Except for a very long tail, its shape and attitude resembled a western Kingbird. The length of the bill was about half the width of the head. The body was generally gray, lighter on the head, breast, belly and under tail covers; darker on the back, rump and upper tail covers. The wings and tail were dark, nearly black. There was a dark line running from the bill to the eye. The sides of the breast and belly were light salmon. A much darker salmon spot was present at the bend of the wing. I did not observe it very well when it flew and can't comment on the wing linings.

The most conspicuous feature was the long tail, which I judged to be about 60 percent of the total length. Even so, it seemed shorter than many of the individuals I had seen in Texas and Oklahoma. Dr Keith Dixon suggested it was a nestling last year and perhaps a female. A persistent anomaly was that one of the high-band tail feathers (number 5?) consistently projected outside the general tail line when the bird was perched.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: I do not recall any vocalizations

Behavior: When I observed it, the bird spent most of its time perched on power lines, fence posts and tall weeds, making short forays in the air or to the ground, presumably to capture insects.

Habitat: When I saw it, it was in a vacant ~~lot~~ ^{field}, covered with grasses and weeds.

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

No other small songbird, except the rare-in-North America Fork-tailed Flycatcher, has a tail this long. The Fork-tailed Flycatcher has a black cap and is white underneath.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have seen many scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Texas and Oklahoma. I have examined the carcass of Michigan's first Fork-tailed Flycatcher and have seen this bird in the wild in Trinidad and Belize.

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

I consulted NATIONAL Geographic Society - Field Guide to Birds of North America, Peterson - A Field Guide to Western Birds and my photographs. Mostly I used my photographs and notes.

Significance of record in this area or the state: This is the first record for Cache County, Behle, Sorensen and White - Utah Birds: A Revised Checklist list the species as "casual", with several well-documented sight records...

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

Three slides are attached.

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

Observer: Lawrence A. Ryel

Signature: Lawrence A. Ryel

Address: 882 North 300 East
Logan, UT 84321

Other observers who independently identified this bird: Ella Sorensen, Craig Kneedy, Terry Sadler, Ronald Ryel, Keith Archibald, Allen Stokes, Terry & John Barnes, Robert Atwood, Keith Dixon, Alice Lindsay, Merrill Webb and others.

Date prepared: August 18, 1992

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