

DOCUMENTATION --
RARE BIRD SIGHTINGMOUNTAIN WEST REGION
AMERICAN BIRDSSpecies: YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
(Vernacular name)Coccyzus americanus
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 6/29 Time Bird Seen: MID AFTERNOON to Locality: FISH SPRINGS NWR ; JUAB COUNTY, UTAHNearest town, county and state: Optical equipment: 10 X 50 BINOCULARSIf photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: UNKNOWN Plumage: Light conditions: GOOD, FULL TO PARTIAL SUNDistance from bird, and how measured: 25' MINIMUM UP TO 50' AS IT FLEW
ESTIMATE EYEBALLED

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

WHILE DRIVING THE INNER CURLEW DIKE AT ABOUT 10mph THE CUCKOO FLEW FROM A STAND OF PHRAGMITES/BULRUSH. MOVED PARALLEL TO THE TRUCK (ON N SIDE) ABOUT 25-30' AWAY CROSSED IN FRONT OF TRUCK + LANDED IN A THIN PATCH OF BULRUSH ALONG THE ROAD + WATER (ABOUT 50' AWAY). THE BIRD WAS APPROACHED ON FOOT WHERE IT THEN FLUSHED BACK TOWARD ITS ORIGINAL SPOT + PASSING AT MOST 25' FROM OBSERVERS. IT THEN LANDED BACK IN THE ORIGINAL STAND OF PHRAGMITES. ITS FLIGHT WAS 15' OR LESS FROM GROUND LEVEL,

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

MARSH AREA DOMINATED BY PHRAGMITES AND BULRUSH STANDS, WITH SOME SALTGRASS AND FAIR INTERSPERSION OF WATER.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

MATT TAKARA - REFUGE ADDRESS OBSERVED BIRD AT SAME TIME

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

THE FLUSHED BIRD EXHIBITED THE TYPICAL BROWNISH BACK + WHITE UNDERPARTS OF THE CUCKOOS AND THE SOMEWHAT FLOPPY FLIGHT. THE LONG TAIL GAVE THE BIRD AWAY AS A CUCKOO. AS THE BIRD LANDED, THE WHITISH TIPS ON TAIL COULD BE SEEN, AS COULD THE RUFOUS ON THE PRIMARIES - THUS CLINCHING THE BIRD AS A YELLOW-BILLED. WHEN APPROACHED ON FOOT THE BIRD FLUSHED, ACTUALLY COMING BACK TOWARDS OBSERVERS. THE YELLOW LOWER MANDIBLE WAS CLEARLY SEEN AS WAS THE RUFOUS ON THE WINGS + THE LONG TAIL. THE WHITE ON THE TAIL FEATHERS WAS AGAIN OBSERVED DURING FLIGHT + AS THE BIRD LANDED IN THICK PHRAEMITES / BULRUSH.

THE BIRD WAS NOT PURSUED FURTHER, AS IDENTIFICATION WAS CLEAR.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

NONE

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

1. BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - YELLOW LOWER MANDIBLE + RUFOUS PRIMARIES ELIMINATED BLACK-BILLED
2. NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT

Prior experience with this and similar species: HAVE OBSERVED THIS SPECIES AND THE BLACK-BILLED COUNTLESS TIMES (>100) WHILE LIVING ON THE EAST COAST (PA, MD, NJ)

This report was written from notes made during ___ after ___ observation; from memory X.

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