

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

4-1993

5-1993

Common Name: VAUX'S Swift

Scientific Name: *Chaetura VAUXI*

Date: MAY 2, 1993 Time: 8:15 AM

Length of time observed: 3 min.

Number: 1

Age: ?

Sex: ?

Location: CONFLUENCE OF WHEELER & OGDEN CANYON WEBER Co, UTAH
9.7 mi. up E 12th Street from I-15 EXIT #347

Latilong: 2

Elevation (if known): Approx 5,100 ft.

Distance to bird: FROM 500 m. to 30 m.

Light conditions: Good - WHEN AGAINST OPEN
SKY BIRD WAS BACKLIT. BEST DIAGNOSTIC
VIEWS WERE SEEN WHEN BIRD FLEW
AROUND CLIFF

Optical equipment: B&L 10x40 BINOX

Weather: Cool / Clear

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

Small swift much smaller than the accompanying white-throated and even slightly smaller than Violet-green Swallows that were in the area. Body shape and wing proportions brought immediate attention to the fact that it was a *Chaetura* swift and not just a distant white-throated or a swallow, i.e.: cylindrical body shape with no forking to tail, narrow wings curved at the wrist; wings, however, proportionately shorter and wider than a white-throated swift but with similar flapping style (as opposed to a swallow's flapping style). The bird continually flapped with virtually no gliding during the entire time of observation. The bird was virtually totally dark brown except for a clear whitish throat that noticeably contrasted with the rest of the underparts. The rump was lighter (buff) than the rest of the upperparts but didn't contrast as much with the rest of the upperparts as did the throat contrast with the underparts. The lighter colors were only visible when the bird flew in front of the cliff blotting out the backlighting. There were no clear demarcation lines of the lighter parts (throat, rump & uppertail coverts), the lighter colors blended into the brownish parts gradually, unlike the sharply defined white & black of a white-throated swift.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery:

No sounds heard

Behavior:

Bird circled cliff possibly foraging for insects with Violet-Green Swallows and White Throated Swifts.

Habitat:

Cliff face and surrounding ~~montane~~ riparian area. Vegetation dominated by *Acer grandidentata* & *Populus angustifolia* along stream. Douglas fir on slope opposing cliff.

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

Black Swift - much larger - totally black with no contrasting throat or rump.
Chimney Swift - Similar shape, perhaps a bit larger than Vaux's. Throat and rump less contrasting. Throat color tends toward a buffy brown rather than a cleaner white (as in this bird). Rump virtually same color as back. Chimneys tend to be more vocal (this bird was silent) and chimney Swifts tend to soar more (this bird flapped virtually all of the time).

W.T. Swift - larger, definite contrast & demarcation between white & dark areas. Different shape.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have seen Vaux's many times in the Pacific Northwest.
I have seen Chimney in Colorado and in Utah (going through a painstaking process separating it from a Vaux's!)

I'm very familiar w/ Black, W.T. Swift and the Swallows

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

I use National Geographic, Peterson's, and yes, I admit it, from time to time the Golden Guide - anything that helps with I.D. info. All descriptions, however, were written in the field; I basically knew what to look for (when studying up on the Chimney).

Significance of record in this area or the state:

Occasional birds are found in migration (But wait, shouldn't this question be answered by the records committee?!)
Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting ☒ notes made later ☐ from memory ☐

Observer: CRAIG L. KNEEDY

Signature:

Address: 314 S. 4500 W.
West Point, Utah
84015

Craig Knedy

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Rumor has it that Dana Green also saw it; please don't count that against me!!

Date prepared: 6/23/93

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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