

96-1997

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Eastern Bluebird

Scientific Name: *Sialia sialis*

Date: 20-Dec-97

Time: 10:30 am
2:30 pm 2:50 pm

Length of time observed: 20 min in 3 viewings

Number: 1

Age: adult

Sex: ♀

Location: Cedar Heights Road, Logan, Utah

Lat/long: 3

Elevation (if known): 4800'

Distance to bird: 15 feet minimum

Light conditions: 2nd & 3rd viewings in
sunlight and bright shade, 1st viewing
in dark shade

Optical equipment: 10x40

Weather: Sunny and clear, temp. 3-20°F, no wind

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

An adult female eastern bluebird was observed under excellent conditions. The bird was a medium sized passerine with a small dark (black) bill and relatively short tail. The tail, rump and much of the wings were blue. The rest of the back and the head was gray-brown. The chin, throat, chest and flanks of this bird were rust colored, while the belly and under tail coverts were white. There was a nearly complete eye ring which was very slightly tear-drop shaped to the rear. The rust colored areas were nearly uniform in color even up to the bill. The rust extended onto the neck between the head and lesser wing coverts. The legs were dark (black).

Voice or call notes and method of delivery:

none heard

Behavior:

Sat for extended periods in tree. Also flew between branches and to ground briefly. While sitting the bird would occasionally flick her wings.

Habitat:

Along irrigation canal in residential area near golf course. The canal is bordered with various trees and shrubs. A path follows along one side.

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

Western bluebird - the female of this species is very similar to the female eastern bluebird. The major difference between these species is in the throat and chin color. On this individual, the throat and chin were rust all the way to the bill - the same color as the rust on the breast. Also, this individual had rust extending on to the sides of the neck, which is not characteristic of ♀ western bluebirds.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have observed this species many times in the eastern and southern US and in southern Arizona. I have also observed many female western bluebirds in Arizona and Utah.

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

Field Guide to the Birds of NA (Nat Geo Soc - 2nd edition)

Field Guide to the Western Birds (Peterson - 2nd edition)

Significance of record in this area or the state:

very few sightings in Utah (only 2?)

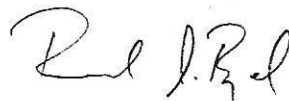
Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

3 photos included

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

Observer: Ronald J. Ryel

Signature:



Address: 1649 North 1000 East

North Logan, UT 84341

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Larry Ryel, Keith Archibald, Bob Atwood, Brian Dixon

Date prepared: Dec. 20, 1997

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