

RECORD #: 8-B-06

IDAHO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

SPECIES:

Eastern Phoebe

REPORTER:

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OTHER OBSERVERS:

Roger Woodruff (my dad, same contact info)
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Kim Thorburn

DATE REPORT PREPARED:

6/6/2006

DATE SIGHTING OCCURRED:

6/1/2006

LOCALITY OF OBSERVATION:

Bonner County, on Eastside Rd between Coolin and Priest River. The phoebe was around the bridge that crosses the Middle Fork of the East River.

HABITAT:

Riparian and open habitat around bridge

CONDITIONS:

Clear without wind, about 75 degrees F, and sunny.

I used Nikon Monarch 8X40 binoculars, Dad had Celestron bins, and Gina had Swarovski 12X bins.

We were less than 15 feet away at the closest.

The sun was fairly high (11am) from straight behind us. Good lighting overall.

DID YOU TAKE NOTES?:

DID YOU CONSULT FIELD GUIDE OR OTHER REFERENCES?:

Yes, later the same day

WHAT GUIDE(S) OR REFERENCE(S) DID YOU CONSULT?:

The Sibley Guide to Birds ©2000

DESCRIPTION:

The bird was obviously a flycatcher from the first sighting. It was light-bellied/dark-backed like many flycatchers, and had the flycatcher shape. The head was very dark and the dark extended down over the face into a "mask". Overall the back was medium gray, towards the dark, and the tail was the same. No bold wing-bars. The lower mandible was predominately black. The throat was noticeably white, and this really stood out when the bird was under the bridge. There was a slight bit of an uncomplete breastband/vest, but was sort of "hazy". The underbelly had a tinge of yellow.

BEHAVIOR:

The phoebe sang almost continuously for long periods of time from the wire above the bridge. The song was a clear upslurred note followed by a huskier almost-downslurred one.

It didn't preen while we watched, but it did scratch its head once, bringing its foot over top of its right wing like most birds.

It spent probably 70% of its time on the wire above the bridge singing, and flew down underneath the bridge a few times, where it perched on different exposed branches and also on the underside of the bridge (on ledges). It pumped its tail the whole time.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU POSITIVELY IDENTIFY THE BIRD, AND WHAT CLINCHED THE IDENTIFICATION FOR YOU?

We knew the ID as soon as we spotted the bird because the song was unmistakable. The dark head and white throat were really good.

HOW DID YOU ELIMINATE SIMILAR SPECIES, AND WHAT WERE THEY?

The song eliminated everything else. The habitat didn't fit anything but Willow Flycatcher (would be stretching even for that), which would show strong wingbars and a pale lower mandible (as well as having a very different song). Western Wood-Pewee would have had more obvious wingbars and would be much grayer overall.

EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES (AND SIMILAR SPECIES):

I've seen Eastern Phoebes a few times on vacation in the East. My dad grew up with them in Georgia, while Gina Sheridan lived in Indiana for a long time. It was the first one Kim Thorburn had seen.

GENERAL BIRDING EXPERIENCE:

I've been birding for 8 years. I spend a LOT of time birding, and would say I'm fairly advanced. Gina and my dad have been birding a lot longer than me.

WERE PHOTO(S), VIDEO, AND/OR AUDIO OBTAINED BY YOU?:

Photo