

Vermilion Flycatcher

24 May 1997

Holstein, Ida Co., IA

*Curtis L. Rector

IBL 67:89, 68:86, Rector 1998

Record Number: 97-12

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Curtis L. Rector, 1531 Harvest Ave., Holstein 51025-8117

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:89

Records Committee: IBL 68:86

Rector, C. L. 1998. Vermilion Flycatcher in Ida County. IBL 68:26-27.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, The plumage and feeding behavior, along with the lack of other possible red and brown birds, are convincing.

A-D, Probably a spring overshoot. Observer considered Scarlet Tanager in analysis. Behavior fits flycatcher family well and description certainly sounds like a Vermilion.

A-D, Adequate description by careful observer aware of rarity of sighting.

lighter below and behind the eye. The thin ring of skin around the eye and in front of the eye was pink-orange. The pupil was dark. The bill was dark gray-brown on the inner half and yellow-orange on the outer half. The legs were dark gray. In flight, the distal one-third of the tail was brown and proximal tail and rump white, with a triangular wedge of white up the back. The upper wing was uniform brown, but the underwing coverts were white with brown leading edge. The bird was heard to make a grunting sound.

During the first evening and the next morning the bird paid little attention to the birders as it picked up small dead fish on the exposed mud flats on the edge of the old oxbow. It walked directly in front of the viewers as close as 10 yards away. When it flew, it generally went to the west where several attempts to locate it were unsuccessful. For the remainder of its sojourn, it often appeared unexpectedly and frequented the far side of the oxbow. I saw the bird on 10 of the 12 days it was present from 5 to 16 September.

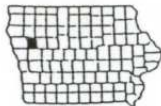
White Ibis is a regular vagrant north of its normal range on the Gulf Coast and southern East Coast. Most vagrants are found from May to September. A few have wandered north as far as Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota. This is the first record for Iowa.

21 I Richards St., Iowa City 52246

✓ VERMILION FLYCATCHER IN IDA COUNTY

CURTIS L. RECTOR

I arrived home on 24 May 1997 at 2 p.m. My parents and nephew had seen a bird in our backyard that they thought at first was a Northern Cardinal. Being an avid birdwatcher, I checked it out myself. The first sighting I had was of a red bird on the grass near the bittersweet hedge. But I could see right away that it was not a cardinal as it lacked a crest, and it had dark feathers. One of the first things I noticed was that it was much tamer than most birds are. We were standing about 50 feet from the bird, which did not seem to mind our presence and continued on with its activity. The bird's plumage was red, except for its wings and tail, which looked brown. At this point, I thought it could be a Scarlet Tanager. I got my binoculars and could see brown plumage down its back from the bird's head to its tail. As I watched it, the bird was taking off from the grass, flying into the air to snatch an insect, and then landing on a nearby fence. From this, I could tell it had to be a species of flycatcher. It continued this activity, and also went from fence to brushpile, almost stopping in mid-air to catch another insect. I watched for about 5-10 minutes until it flew west toward our farm grove and out of sight. I had taken



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mental notes of this bird during the time I watched it and returned to the house for a bird book to confirm its identity. I looked in my copy of Birds of North America and positively identified this bird as a male Vermilion Flycatcher. I knew it had to be a rare sighting in Iowa but I didn't know how rare until I read that this species is common in the Southwest. I went back outside to see if I could see if I could find it again but I could not locate it. I then called the Iowa Birdline to report it, being a rare sighting in the state.

This is only the fourth record of this southwestern species in Iowa. Two of the other reports were also in May and the third was in October. Ironically, I also saw a Vermilion Flycatcher at Rice Lake in Worth County on 13 May 1988 (Anderson *Iowa Bird Life* 59:63, 1989), the second sighting in the state.

1531 Harvest Ave., Holstein, IA 51025-8117

I.O.U. BUSINESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marshalltown, 7 March 1998, 10:58 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Mark Proescholdt, presiding

Present: Dan Dorrance, Maridel Jackson, Ann Johnson, Curt Nelson, Mark Proescholdt, Jim Scheib, Carol Thompson. Also attending: Jim Dinsmore and Hank Zalelet.

Reports

Future meetings: Plans are coming along well for the 75th anniversary meeting in Ames this spring. The Fall 1998 meeting will probably be held at Camp Sunnyside near Des Moines. It was moved (Dorrance, seconded by Jackson) to accept the Rathbun Bird Club's invitation to host the Spring 1999 meeting in the Centerville area in May 1999, pending approval by the membership. Motion passed. Sites for future I.O.U. meetings were discussed briefly.

Meeting Funds: The board reaffirmed the existing policy of splitting any extra money from I.O.U. meetings on a 50:50 basis between the I.O.U. and the local host. Any extra money for the I.O.U. will go into the I.O.U. meeting fund.

Dues: The board approved the current dues structure except for life memberships. It was moved (Thompson, seconded by Johnson) that, effective in 1999, Life Memberships be structured to 25 years of the regular membership rate. Motion passed.

Teacher Activity Books: Zalelet discussed the book and how it was being marketed. It was moved (Johnson, seconded by Thompson) to sell I.O.U. materials such as booklets and checklists to third parties for resale for cost plus 30%. Motion passed.

Migratory Bird Book: Zalelet reported that all of the writing for this book is complete and the book should be done by June 1998.

T-shirts and Hats: Dinsmore reported on plans to have I.O.U. t-shirts available at the spring meeting. Scheib reported that I.O.U. hats will also be ready then.

Treasurer's Position: The board discussed the possibility of splitting up the duties of the Treasurer to help alleviate the large amount of time needed to carry out the Treasurer's duties. It was moved (Thompson, seconded by Johnson) that "The Board recommends the establishment of an administrative position to be called the Registrar to report to the Board. The major duties of the Registrar shall be upkeep of membership files, preparing and distributing renewal notices, maintaining the membership directory, distributing lists and mailing labels, and undertaking correspondence as necessary." Motion passed. The possibility of offering an honorarium for certain I.O.U. positions was also discussed but no action was taken.

Funding Requests: Acting on the directive of the membership at the fall 1997 business meeting, the board discussed what policy should be established for funding requests to the I.O.U. from outside sources. It was moved (Jackson, seconded by Scheib) that all proposals shall be directed to the Board. Proposals for \$500 or less can be acted upon by the Board. Proposals for greater than that amount shall be discussed by the board and presented to the membership for approval. All funding requests are limited to amounts budgeted for each fiscal year. Motion passed.

Tom Kent
211 Richards St.
Iowa City, Ia. 52246

97-12

June 10, '97

Dear Tom:

I am writing to you in regard to a rare species of bird, at least in Iowa, which was sighted where I live on May 24, 1997. I phoned it in to the Iowa Birdline at the time. Not until tonight had I received any inquiries of this sighting. A friend gave me your name and address so I could relate the sighting to you.

I arrived home on May 24, 1997 at 2:00 P.M. in the afternoon. My folks and nephew had spotted a bird in our backyard that they at first thought was a cardinal. Being an avid birdwatcher, I checked it out myself. The first sighting I had was a red bird on the grass near the bittersweet hedge. But I could see right away that it wasn't a cardinal, as it lacked a crest, and it had dark feathers. One of the first things I noticed was it was much tamer than most birds are. We were standing about

50 feet from the bird, which didn't seem to mind our presence and continued on with its activity. The bird's plumage was red, except for its wings and tail, which looked brown. At this point, I thought it could be a Scarlet Tanager. Time to get the binoculars, which the pair I have is a Bushnell Ensign Insta-Focus 7 x 35, a birthday gift from many years ago. Through the binoculars, I could also see brown plumage down its back from the bird's head to its tail. As I watched it, the bird was taking off from the grass, flying into the air to snatch an insect, then landing on a nearby fence. From this, I could tell it had to be a species of Flycatcher. It continued this activity, and also went from fence to brushpile, almost stopping mid-air to catch another insect. I watched for about 5-10 minutes until it flew west toward our farm grove

and out of sight. I had taken mental pictures of this bird during the time I watched it, and returned to the house for a bird book to confirm its identity.

I looked in my Birds of North America book and positively identified this bird as a male Vermilion Flycatcher. While it was the first one I had ever seen, I knew it had to be a rare sighting in Iowa.

I didn't know how rare until I read that this species is common in the Southwest.

I went back outside to see if I could spot it again, but it wasn't to be. I decided to call the Iowa Birdline to report it, being a rare sighting in the state.

It was sunny that day, with a cool breeze.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Feel free to drop me a line any time.

Sincerely,
Curtis A. Rector

1531 Harvest Avenue
Holstein, Iowa 51025-8117