

Western Tanager

7 May 1991

South Elk Rock State Park, Marion Co., IA

Schantz(photo), *Johnson, *Fuller

IBL 61:96, 62:71

Record Number: 91-25
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS:

Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

Jim Fuller, 7 May, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240

PHOTOGRAPH:

Tim Schantz, 7 May, P-0304 (not circulated for first review)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 61:96

Records Committee: IBL 62:71

VOTE: 7-A-D

A-D, It would be hard to misidentify a male Western Tanager.
Excellent descriptions.

A-D, Good documentations and nice bird!

A-D, No doubt about this one. Good find and good descriptions.
I presume the photos were not diagnostic.

A-D, Since I have not seen the photos. Possibly A-P when I see
photos. Excellent documentations that describe the male of this
species beyond any doubt and clearly eliminate any other
possibilities.

A-D, Excellent documentations with very good identifying
details.

REVOTE at meeting of 11 Apr 1992 after viewing photos: 6 A-P, 1
A-D



Western Tanager P-0304
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
7 May 1991 Tim Schantz

91-25

<No.17> 28 +08 MNKN 981. 11-000

91-25

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Western Tanager

Location: South Elk Rock State Park, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., Iowa

Habitat: Soft deciduous and brushy area near water

Date: 7 May 1991

Time: 12:45 pm to 5:30 pm

(seen x3 for total of 25-30 minutes during this time frame)

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Tim Schantz (photos), Eugene & Eloise Armstrong, Cal & Bernie Knight, Jim Fuller

Description of bird: The bird was approximately oriole size and was, in fact, associating with Northern Orioles. The body was a brilliant lemon yellow both above and below. The tail and back were black as were the wings, with the exception of two yellow wing bars matching the body color. The upper wing bar looked more like a patch as it was short and wide. The lower wing bar was longer and narrower and lacked a bit of color intensity. Red color extended from the cap, across the face (barely including the area around the eye), and down the chin onto the throat. There was not really a line of demarcation between the red of the face and the yellow of the body, but it was more of a blending of color. The eye was dark with a narrow, yellow orbital ring. The legs were a nondescript grayish color. The bill was a typical tanager bill, somewhat long, pointed and thick at the base, with the upper mandible slightly curved and the lower mandible fairly straight. The color was a dull yellow. The bird fed primarily in the willows at various levels. I did not hear it call.

Similar species and how eliminated: The combination of red face and yellow body eliminated all other tanagers. Females of other species would not show red on the face, and young males going into first alternate plumage would not have the red coloration restricted to the head.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): During most of the time I observed the bird, the sky was mostly sunny with the sun directly at our backs. Later in the afternoon it was mostly overcast. Observation was through 7x26 binoculars as close as 15-20 feet.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen many Western Tanagers in the western United States.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Discussion among those of us observing the bird. Peterson's Western Birds was consulted prior to completing documentation.

How long before field notes made? Notes dictated immediately after observation
How long before this form completed? Evening of 7 May

25-1P

91-25

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

Rare Bird Report

Species: Western Tanager

Location: South Elk Rock State Park, Marion Co., Iowa

Date 7 April 1991

Optics: Zeiss 10 x 40B

Marks: See Photos

Note: Please keep photos. I have better photographs if desired.

Tim Schantz
309 E Robinson St.
Knoxville, IA 50138

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No
Flying conditions (lighting, distance, optics): During most of the time I
observed the bird, the sky was mostly sunny with the sun directly at my back.
Later in the afternoon it was mostly overcast. Observation was through light
bushes as close as 15-20 feet.
Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen many Western
Tangars in the western United States.
References and persons consulted before writing description: Discussion among
those of us observing the bird. Peterson's Western Birds was consulted prior to
completing documentation.
How long before field notes made: Notes dictated immediately after observation.
How long before this form completed: Evening of 7 May

7-19 91-25
DOCUMENTATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: WESTERN TANAGER (Male)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240

OTHER OBSERVERS: Tim Schantz and Ann Johnson at the same time. Cal and Bernie Knight, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong before. Denny Thompson and Beth Brown after.

LOCATION: Small trees near edge of flood pool of Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County.

DATE: May ⁷ 8, 1991. (5:15 to 5:25 PM)

BACKGROUND: Tim Schantz reported seeing a western tanager at this location on the morning of May 7th to the Iowa Birdline. I drove to the site late in the afternoon that day, arriving about 5:00PM. Tim Schantz and Ann Johnson were there, saying they had recently seen the bird. After a few minutes, the bird appeared in a small willow only 30-40 feet away, and was seen for about 10 minutes in the same and other nearby trees, sometimes as close as 15 feet.

DESCRIPTION: The general size was compared to a northern oriole which was a few feet away on one occasion. It was not quite as long, but was more stocky and rounder than the oriole. The bird was generally three colors, red head, black wings, back, and tail, and yellow underparts and rump. More specifically, the head was a vivid red color which did not have a sharp demarcation with the yellow of the upper breast and nape; rather it was a transition with red to orange to yellow. The red extended behind the eye onto the nape and across the throat. The eye was dark with a yellow ring around it. The bill was gray, and the legs were a darker gray. All underparts, including the vent, were a lemon yellow color. There were two wing bars, both yellow in color which contrasted with the black wing. The wing bars differed in size and shape, with the more anterior one being thicker, but not as long, while the posterior one was longer and thinner. The rump was lemon yellow, and contrasted with the black upperparts, and black tail (both top and bottom surfaces). The bird hopped around foraging in the willow trees. I did not hear it sing or call.

SIMILAR SPECIES: There is not another bird of this size which has this combination of colors, except a molting scarlet tanager, which appears blotchy, and does not have wing bars in any plumage.

OPTICS and VIEWING CONDITIONS: It was late afternoon on a sunny day, and I watched the bird toward the northwest for some time, and later toward the south. The bird was viewed at distances of

15-40 feet (never more than 15 feet off the ground) using Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars.

FIELD NOTES and GUIDES: Field notes were made immediately, and this report was typed on May 10th. No field guides were consulted.

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Road, Iowa City, Iowa, 52242

OTHER OBSERVERS: Tim Schantz and Ann Johnson at the same time. Cal and Bernice Knight, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong before. Penny Thompson and Beth Brown after.

LOCATION: Small trees near edge of flood pool of Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County.

DATE: May 8, 1991. (5:15 to 5:35 PM)

BACKGROUND: Tim Schantz reported seeing a western tanager at this location on the morning of May 8th to the Iowa Birdline. I drove to the site late in the afternoon that day, arriving about 5:00 PM. Tim Schantz and Ann Johnson were there, saying they had recently seen the bird. After a few minutes, the bird appeared in a small willow only 30-40 feet away, and was seen for about 10 minutes in the same and other nearby trees, sometimes as close as 15 feet.

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