

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOCUMENTING RARE AND UNUSUAL BIRDS

To improve the accuracy and breadth of Wyoming's ornithological record, the Wyoming Bird Records Committee offers the following recommendations to assist with documentation of bird sightings.

1. Acceptable documentation must eliminate all similar species. Remember that immatures or juveniles of one species can be very similar to adults of another species. Examples that might cause confusion are gulls, jaegers, sparrows, and longspurs. Species that exhibit multiple color morphs can also be problematic.
2. Study and learn bird topography. Most field guides provide a schematic of avian body parts and feather groups. Specialized identification guides also provide specific structural and anatomical detail. A thorough grasp of this subject will heighten your general birding skill and facilitate accurate, detailed documentation.
3. Take meticulous and thorough field notes during or immediately after the observation. Alternatively, you can also use an audio recorder or digital camera to capture identification details. If the bird is cooperative, write your notes during the observation period. Try not to consult your field guide while you are writing to avoid predisposing your identification. Do not rely on memory to document a rare or unusual bird.
4. A good physical description of the bird is most crucial and you should include everything you observe. Include all details concerning plumage, shape, relative size, eyes, legs, and bill. Note the colors, including color distribution, color density, and color contrast between different feather groups. It is helpful to consider proportional details, i.e., bill length compared to head width, tail length as a proportion of body length, and length of primary projection compared to tail length. Record plumage characteristics such as degree of wear or signs of molt. When describing size, try to compare nearby known species or some other object of known dimensions. Avoid trying to estimate size in actual units (inches, feet) since this is very subjective.
5. Observe and record the subject bird's behavior. While behavior is seldom diagnostic by itself, in combination with other details, it is often conclusive. One of the few documented observations of the Connecticut Warbler in Wyoming was accepted by the WBRC, in part, because it was observed walking, not hopping.
6. If possible, take photographs. Take a number of shots to capture a complete portrait. The advent of digital photography has greatly increased the number of records the WBRC receives with photographs, which greatly helps our work. However, a photograph should be accompanied by a written description, if possible, as one photograph will likely not display all the diagnostic features.
7. If you do not have a camera, consider making a sketch. You do not need the talent of Rembrandt or Audubon to draw a convincing and diagnostic sketch. Utilize your knowledge of bird topography and you will be surprised how well you do. Draw this sketch in the field during the observation. Do not rely on memory.
8. Vocalizations can be extremely important for identification, especially for some groups such as flycatchers. Describe what you hear while you are listening. Better yet, record the bird, even if you do not have professional recording equipment. A hand-held recorder or cellular phone with a built in microphone or a digital camera with a video recording feature can provide reliable results. There are many excellent collections of bird songs and calls that can prepare birders for the unexpected find by ear alone.
9. Specimens that can be identified and repositied at the University of Wyoming Zoological Museum are still the most convincing evidence of an occurrence. If you encounter a dead rare or unusual bird in the field, please deliver the specimen to an appropriate authority, e.g. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, National Park Service, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel. Note the exact date and location of the discovery. Freeze the specimen if delivery is to be delayed. Always use gloves or a plastic bag to pick up dead birds, and double-bag them with a note inside that includes the date and location and your contact information.
10. For questions about the Wyoming Bird Records Committee or clarification of these recommendations, please contact the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Nongame Bird Biologist at the Lander Regional Office, 260 Buena Vista, Lander, WY 82520; 307-332-2688; Andrea.Orabona@wyo.gov.

DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED FOR ALL SIGHTINGS (AS) OF THE FOLLOWING SPECIES

Acorn Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Purple Finch
American Black Duck	Gray Vireo	Purple Gallinule
American Woodcock	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Purple Martin
Ancient Murrelet	Great Black-backed Gull	Red Knot
Anna's Hummingbird	Great Crested Flycatcher	Red Phalarope
Arctic Tern	Greater Prairie-Chicken	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Baird's Sparrow	Green Heron	Red-faced Warbler
Baltimore Oriole	Gyrfalcon	Red-necked Grebe
Band-tailed Pigeon	Harris's Hawk	Red-shouldered Hawk
Barn Owl	Heermann's Gull	Red-throated Loon
Barred Owl	Hepatic Tanager	Rivoli's Hummingbird
Bay-breasted Warbler	Hermit Warbler	Ross's Gull
Black Rail	Hoary Redpoll	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Black Scoter	Hooded Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Black Swift	Hudsonian Godwit	Scarlet Tanager
Black Vulture	Iceland Gull	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Blackburnian Warbler	Kentucky Warbler	Scott's Oriole
Black-headed Gull	Laughing Gull	Sedge Wren
Black-legged Kittiwake	Lawrence's Goldfinch	Short-billed Dowitcher
Black-throated Green Warbler	LeConte's Sparrow	Smith's Longspur
Black-throated Sparrow	Least Bittern	Snowy Owl
Blue-headed Vireo	Least Tern	Snowy Plover
Blue-winged Warbler	Lesser Black-backed Gull ²	Sprague's Pipit
Brambling	Lesser Frigatebird	Streaked Shearwater
Brant	Lesser Nighthawk	Tricolored Heron
Brown Pelican	Little Blue Heron	Tufted Duck
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Little Gull	Varied Thrush
Canada Warbler	Long-billed Murrelet	Vaux's Swift
Canyon Towhee	Long-tailed Jaeger	Vermilion Flycatcher
Cape May Warbler	Mew Gull	Western Bluebird
Carolina Wren	Mississippi Kite	Western Screech-Owl
Cassin's Sparrow ¹	Mottled Duck	White Ibis
Cassin's Vireo	Mourning Warbler	White-eyed Vireo
Common Gallinule	Mute Swan	White-headed Woodpecker
Connecticut Warbler	Nelson's Sparrow	White-tailed Kite
Crested Caracara	Northern Bobwhite	White-tailed Ptarmigan
Curve-billed Thrasher	Northern Cardinal	Whooper Swan
Eastern Meadowlark	Northern Hawk Owl	Whooping Crane
Eastern Phoebe	Pacific Wren	Winter Wren
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Painted Bunting	Wood Stork
Eurasian Wigeon	Palm Warbler	Wood Thrush
Field Sparrow	Parasitic Jaeger	Worm-eating Warbler
Flammulated Owl	Philadelphia Vireo	Yellow Grosbeak
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow Rail
Garganey	Pine Warbler	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Glaucous Gull	Piping Plover	Yellow-billed Loon
Glaucous-winged Gull	Pomarine Jaeger	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Glossy Ibis	Prairie Warbler	Yellow-throated Vireo
Golden-crowned Sparrow	Prothonotary Warbler	Yellow-throated Warbler

¹ Except confirmed breeding in Torrington area

² Except L19 & L27

**DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED FOR THE FIRST LATILONG SIGHTINGS (FL)
AND ALL NESTING OBSERVATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING SPECIES**

American Bittern	Indigo Bunting
American Golden-Plover	Juniper Titmouse
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Least Flycatcher
Bewick's Wren	Lesser Goldfinch
Black-and-white Warbler	Long-tailed Duck
Black-backed Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler
Black-billed Cuckoo	Nashville Warbler
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Northern Parula
Blackpoll Warbler	Northern Pygmy-Owl
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Northern Saw-whet Owl
Black-throated Gray Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Bobolink	Pacific Loon
Boreal Owl	Peregrine Falcon
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-headed Woodpecker
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Bushtit	Ross's Goose
Cackling Goose	Ruddy Turnstone
Cassin's Kingbird	Sabine's Gull
Cattle Egret	Summer Tanager
Chestnut-collared Longspur	Surf Scoter
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Swamp Sparrow
Chimney Swift	Tennessee Warbler
Common Tern	Trumpeter Swan
Dickcissel	Upland Sandpiper
Dunlin	Virginia's Warbler
Eastern Bluebird	Whimbrel
Eastern Screech-Owl	White-rumped Sandpiper
Gray Flycatcher	White-winged Crossbill
Great Egret	White-winged Dove
Greater Scaup	White-winged Scoter
Greater White-fronted Goose	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay
Great-tailed Grackle	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Hammond's Flycatcher	

Current 9 April 2018

EXAMPLE

Rare and Unusual Bird Sighting Form
WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
260 BUENA VISTA, LANDER, WY 82520

EXAMPLE

The Wyoming Bird Records Committee sincerely thanks all observers for submitting this form to help keep Wyoming's bird records up-to-date and accurate. It is not necessary to complete every block if some details are lacking, but please provide all the details you can and attach photographs, if available.

Common Name: Red-bellied Woodpecker	Specific location of observation: Wyoming Hereford Ranch near Cheyenne, WY
Scientific Name: <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	
Observation Date: 21-26 August 2006	
Observation Time: morning	UTM E 575716 UTM N 4540789 Datum NAD83 Zone 13T
Length of Observation: several minutes each day	Latitude/Longitude WGS84 41.12786 N -104.6198 W
Distance from Bird: closest at 10 meters	T N / R W / Sec. / ¼ Sec. / ¼ ¼ Sec.
Light Conditions: varied	Weather at time of observation: varied
Optical Equipment: Zeiss 7x42 binoculars	
Notes made: during sighting <u>Y</u> from memory _____	Prior weather and number of days since last change: unknown
Date report prepared: 11 December 2006	

Give a general description of the bird seen and any other details of interest relating to the observation.

Medium-sized woodpecker with black and white barred back and wings; gray underparts; red cap; and black, tapered, stout bill.

SEX	AGE	PLUMAGE		PHOTO/AUDIO/DRAWING
Male:	Adult: Y	Breeding: Y	Juvenal:	Enclosed: Y
Female: 1	Juvenile/Immature:	Winter:	Dark Morph:	Available:
Unknown:	2-3 year bird:	Eclipse:	Light Morph:	Please submit a copy of your field drawings.
Total Number: 1	Unknown:	Other:		

If possible, please include in the sections below details of the specific body parts actually observed during the sighting.

BILL: Entirely black, medium length, and tapered to a sharp point.

HEAD: Mostly gray (same color as the underparts) on throat, chin, sides of head to above the eyes, and forehead. Diffuse red just above the bill. More solidly red on the crown and nape.

NECK: Gray on the front and sides, red from the crown/nape extending onto the lower back and neck.

UPPERPARTS: Extensively barred black and white cross the mantle and wings.

UNDERPARTS: Entirely pale gray with some faint black edging to the undertail coverts.

Please do not write below here; for WBRC use only.

Form updated March 2016

Record Number	Category	Latilong	Date Received
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WINGS: Same as the mantle – barred black and white – and reaching to only about the mid-tail when perched.	
TAIL: Barred black and white, long with at least the outermost feathers longer than the others, more extensively black, and sharply pointed.	
LEGS & FEET: Grayish in color. Not observed well.	
List similar species and describe how or why you eliminated them. No other woodpecker species has a combination of black and white barred back and wings, gray underparts, and red crown/nape.	
Describe the behavior of this bird and the interaction with others. Actively calling on most days. Most often seen perched on large branches of cottonwood trees.	
What is the habitat at this location? Ranch with ornamental plantings. Mostly seen in an avenue of cottonwood trees bordering the entrance road.	
If heard, describe the bird's song or vocalizations. Single noted loud "queer".	Reporter's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
How many years have you birded? 25 years	Corroborating observers who are not reporting separately.
Have you observed this species before? I grew up with this species in Indiana and observed it extensively in the southern U.S. and eastern Colorado.	

Please do not write below here; for WBRC use only.

Form updated March 2016

Record Number	Latilong	Atlas Update	Sighting Entered in WGFD WOS Database
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THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR SIGHTING TO THE WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE!



Rare and Unusual Bird Sighting Form
WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
260 BUENA VISTA, LANDER, WY 82520

The Wyoming Bird Records Committee sincerely thanks all observers for submitting this form to help keep Wyoming's bird records up-to-date and accurate. It is not necessary to complete every block if some details are lacking, but please provide all the details you can and attach photographs, if available.

Common Name:	Specific location of observation:
Scientific Name:	
Observation Date:	
Observation Time:	UTM E _____ UTM N _____ Datum _____ Zone _____ T
Length of Observation:	Latitude _____° _____' _____" N Longitude _____° _____' _____" W
Distance from Bird:	T _____ N R _____ W Sec. _____ ¼ Sec. _____ ¼ ¼ Sec. _____
Light Conditions:	Weather at time of observation:
Optical Equipment:	
Notes made: during sighting _____ from memory _____	Prior weather and number of days since last change:
Date report prepared	

Give a general description of the bird seen and any other details of interest relating to the observation.

SEX	AGE	PLUMAGE		PHOTO/AUDIO/DRAWING
Male:	Adult:	Breeding:	Juvenal:	Enclosed:
Female:	Juvenile/Immature:	Winter:	Dark Morph:	Available:
Unknown:	2-3 year bird:	Eclipse:	Light Morph:	Please submit a copy of your field drawings.
Total Number:	Unknown:	Other:		

If possible, please include in the sections below details of the specific body parts actually observed during the sighting.

BILL:
HEAD:
NECK:
UPPERPARTS:
UNDERPARTS:

Please do not write below here; for WBRC use only

Form updated March 2016

Record Number	Category	Latilong	Date Received
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WINGS:

TAIL:

LEGS & FEET:

List similar species and describe how or why you eliminated them.

Describe the behavior of this bird and the interaction with others.

What is the habitat at this location?

If heard, describe the bird's song or vocalizations.

Reporter's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

How many years have you birded?

Corroborating observers who are not reporting separately.

Have you observed this species before?

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Form updated March 2016

Record Number

Category

Latilong

Date Received

THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR SIGHTING TO THE WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE!

EXAMPLE

Rare and Unusual Bird Sighting Form – Photographs Only
WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
260 BUENA VISTA, LANDER, WY 82520

EXAMPLE

The Wyoming Bird Records Committee sincerely thanks all observers for submitting this form and your photographs to help keep Wyoming's bird records up-to-date and accurate.

Common Name: Great Egret	Specific location of observation: Lake Terry, Cheyenne Country Club, Cheyenne, WY			
Scientific Name: <i>Ardea alba</i>				
Observation Date: 27 April 2015				
Legal Description:				
UTM E 512574	UTM N 4556747	Datum NAD 83	Zone 13	T
Observer (name and contact information): Pete Arnold				



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Form updated March 2016

Record Number:	Category:	Latilong:	Date Received:
Atlas Update:		Sighting Entered in WGFD WOS Database:	

Rare and Unusual Bird Sighting Form – Photographs Only
WYOMING BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
260 BUENA VISTA, LANDER, WY 82520

The Wyoming Bird Records Committee sincerely thanks all observers for submitting this form and your photographs to help keep Wyoming's bird records up-to-date and accurate.

Common Name:	Specific location of observation:			
Scientific Name:				
Observation Date:				
Legal Description:				
UTM E	UTM N	Datum	Zone	T
Observer (name and contact information):				

Please do not write below here; for WBRC use only

Form updated March 2016

Record Number:	Category:	Latilong:	Date Received:
Atlas Update:		Sighting Entered in WGF D WOS Database:	