

**Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya***

1 basic

April 29, 2006.

Seen at 1:30 for 3 minutes, later observed by Adam Knight and myself

Perched on Tree Swallow nest box

Long Point Bird Observatory, Tip station

Habitat: dunes, medium-sized Cottonwoods (10m.), with grasses and sparse shrub layer, perched on Tree Swallow nest box.

Weather: cloud cover – 2/10, winds from West at a 2 on the Beaufort wind scale, ~14 degrees.

Lighting: fairly poor, looking slightly into the sun

Distance: fairly close ~25 m.

Optics: Bausch and Lomb Discoverer 10X42 binoculars

Circumstance: The evening before (April 28<sup>th</sup>) Peter Coo found a Say's Phoebe along the north beach at the Long Point tip. This bird was seen for close to half an hour before disappearing despite a fairly intensive search for it. The next day I was walking along the Tree Swallow grid when I saw a flycatcher "flycatch" and land on a nest box. Upon viewing the bird with binoculars it was evident that this was the Say's Phoebe seen the previous day. The bird remained for roughly three minutes until I left to go get other people. When I returned with the others the bird was nowhere to be seen, so we conducted a search where Adam Knight was able to relocate the Phoebe 400 meters farther west along the dune where we ended up last seeing it. Mike Boyd was able to photograph the bird quite well on the evening of April 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### Description:

- roughly same size as EAPH, as well as WTSP
- upperparts gray, although darker gray almost black on head
- weak light gray or “dirty” white wing bars, rest of wings same gray colouring as on upperparts
- stubby but petite all dark bill
- dark eye
- several rectal bristles evident
- throat and chin whitish colouring
- upper belly brownish-gray/chestnut band followed by a pronounced buffy/salmon flanks and undertail coverts
- legs dark
- tail all black
- no vocalizations were heard

#### Behaviour:

This bird was actively feeding/foraging. Several times I observed it flycatching for insects. When this bird did flycatch, it would fly up perhaps 20 feet and loop back always returning to the same perch that it had taken off from. As well this bird “bobbed” its tail; I didn’t see it moves its tail from side to side, rather up and down.

#### Similar Species:

My first reaction to seeing this bird without binoculars was a Eastern Kingbird. However quickly realizing the bird was too small along with lacking a white outer tail band led me to think of a Phoebe as it pumped its tail vigorously. It behaved quite similarly to an Eastern Phoebe, although this bird had a very prominent salmon/buffy underparts, which eliminated Eastern right away. Distinguished from a female Vermillion Flycatcher by the much larger size, tail behavior, facial pattern and overall dark gray upperpart colouring.

Experience with Species: none

Report written: June 8, 2006, taken from field notes

Observer:

Kenneth G. Burrell

70 Arthur Rd.

Heidelberg, Ont.

N0B 1Y0

burrellsc@golden.net



Photograph Mike Boyd, April 28, 2006. Long Point tip.