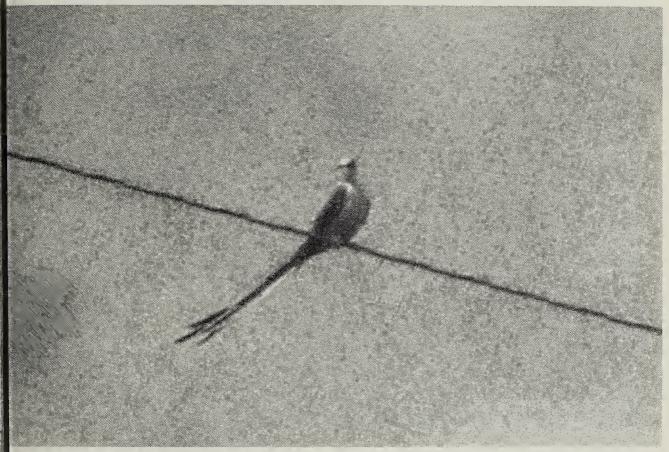
## ISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER NEAR DNEY, MANITOBA

HORTON, 3265 Rosser Avenue, Brandon, Manitoba. R7B OH1



or-tailed Flycatcher near Sydney, Manitoba, July 1987

Jean Horton

20 July 1987 a Scissor-tailed tcher was observed by Betty and Handysides at their farm located es south of Sydney, Manitoba on 352. This bird was seen frequently ad cottonwood trees and seemed cularly attracted to a large water h near the farm home where it was from a distance of only 10 feet. On al occasions the Handysides noted ne bird fearlessly attacked crows in ard and was generally seen in astion with Western Kingbirds. They oted that the bird was always seen early part of the day and rarely in venings.

25 July 1987, the Handysides ted their sighting to Bob and Rae rson of Carberry who contacted

Brandon's Rare Bird Alert. Consequently, on 26 July this Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen by Bob and Rae Anderson, Cliff Findlay, Jean Horton, Hazel Patmore and Donna and Norman Short. It was usually with Western Kingbirds and was seen clearly perched on fenceposts and hydro wires on the Handyside farm. Light conditions at the time were excellent with full sun and a clear sky — providing excellent visibility. It was noted that the extremely long forked tail was usually spread open in flight. The upper parts of the bird were observed to be a grey color and the underparts were white with some pink on the sides. Short and Horton observed a reddish patch under the wing when the bird was in flight and both obtained photographs of the bird.

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The flycatcher was not seen again until about one week later when the Handysides observed it in a pasture about 0.5 mi. east of the farm house; this was the last recorded sighting.

Twelve other Manitoba records of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers exist for the period 1880 to October 1953.<sup>2</sup> More recent sightings include the following: an immature bird 18 August 1979 by Peter Taylor, 13 km northwest of Whitemouth, Manitoba; one 26 May 1980 by Sharon Howe at Pinawa, Manitoba; one 5 June 1982 by Dennis Fast north of Oak Hammock Marsh; and one 11 May 1985 by the Gordon Grieef family at Grand Beach Provincial Park

- (P. Taylor and H. Copland, p. comm.).3 4 1
- <sup>1</sup> HATCH, DAVID 1982. Chick Notes. Winnipeg Free Press, 30 Jul
- <sup>2</sup> LAWRENCE, A.G. n.d. Chick Notes. Winnipeg Free Press (support from records of Herb Copland, Manimuseum of Man and Nature).
- <sup>3</sup> TAYLOR, PETER 1979. Scissor-ta Flycatcher near Whitemouth, Mania Blue Jay 37(4):228.
- <sup>4</sup> TAYLOR, PETER 1984. Wings a the Winnipeg. Manitoba Natura Society, Eco Series No. 2

## UNUSUAL VARIATIONS IN PLUMAGE OF THE HOUSE SPARROW

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Since its deliberate introduction into North America during the 19th century, the (originally) European House Sparrow has not only spread widely -- more widely, indeed, than many of us would wish -- but also shown so rapid a degree of plumage variation that at least one, perhaps several North American subspecies may already be recognized.

Many individual variations have been reported, including albinistic and melanistic individuals. To the list of variations I should like to add two more, both among the mob of birds on the University of Saskatchewan campus

during late March and early April 1 and both males.

The cap of the male House Sparro normally grey. In one individual, I ever, the colour of th whole foreh crown and nape was blue, almo cerulean blue. Otherwise his plur was standard.

The second differed from the upattern in a very odd fashion. It wif a line of colour demarcation had drawn across the back, just below not at) the base of the mantle, whole middle and lower part of back and the rump were of a very fawn colour. The tail, however, quite normal.

I should stress that both birds seen repeatedly, always in the are tween the Thorvaldson Building an Murray Memorial Library. When mob of sparrows of which they we part left the campus, they departed