

NOTES

EASTERN PHOEBE IN MONTANA

P. D. SKAAR, Biology Department, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana 59715

On the afternoon of 16 September 1974 I saw an Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) about 11 miles east and 3 miles north of Vida, McCone County, Montana. A "gestalt" identification was made immediately, since I am very familiar with the species in the east and midwest. I then spent about 15 minutes watching the bird in good light at about 50 feet through a 20x scope as it caught insects over a cattail-margined sump below the dam of a small reservoir and as it perched on a fence that traversed the sump. The following details were verified: A medium-sized flycatcher, persistent tail-pumping especially upon alighting, generally grayish above and whitish below, darker on the head, wing-bars almost non-existent, no eye-ring, bill entirely black. The bird was very tame and gave no call. Although the Eastern Phoebe has bred within 100 miles of Montana in Alberta and in the Dakotas, there is only one prior published report for Montana, and that report is unconvincing. G. B. Thomas included it among the species he observed in Yellowstone County in 1918 (Hoheisel, Proc. Mont. Acad. Sci. 31:73-80, 1971). Thomas provided no detail other than to assert that it was rare, arrived 2 June and bred. Saunders (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 14, 1921) did not mention this record, although he cited many other Thomas observations.