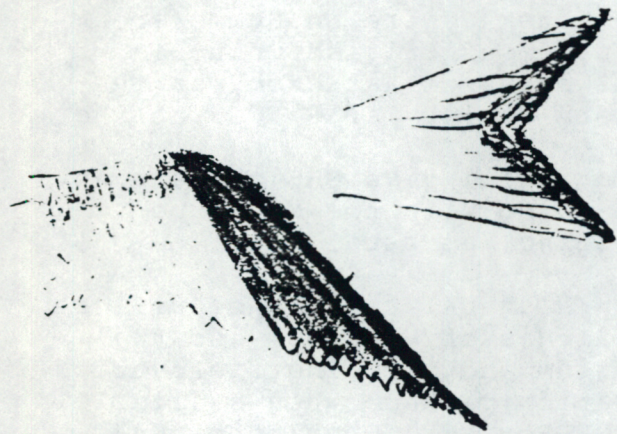


Some words about documentation

Every serious birder knows that written documentation is required for acceptance of all rare birds reported. These include remarkable or extraordinary local or seasonal sightings. Detailed descriptions written *in the field* are essential in order to determine the status of these reports.

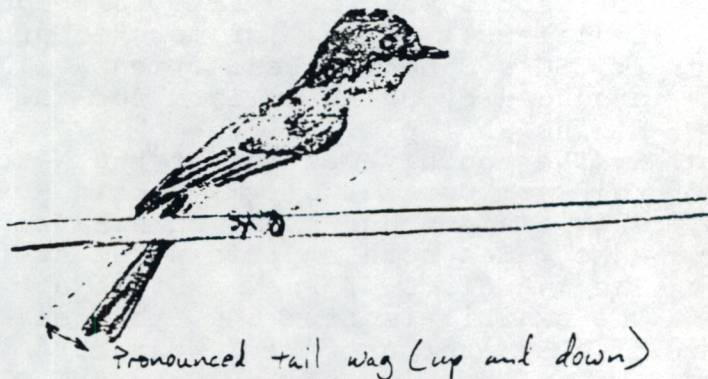
Every CBC packet includes a documentation form for this purpose. However, use of this form is not mandatory. It is included in the packet simply to remind observers of the length and breadth of detail that should be included when submitting documentation. Use this form or follow the form in originating your own more appropriate form. But remember, submission of documentation should never be omitted on a rarity.



Wing and tail details of an immature Sabine's Gull. Comox, British Columbia CBC. Illustration/Willie Haras.

The supporting details accompanying each sighting of a rarity must include exact location, date, time of day, distance from the bird, association with other species, habitat, optical equipment used, light conditions in the field, length of time observed, and the names and addresses of all birders who studied

the bird. Most importantly, however, is a detailed description of size and shape, plumage (pattern and color), behavior, voice and any other diagnostic details. Description of the bird at rest and in flight should also be included if possible.



A quick drawing of an Eastern Phoebe shows behavior as well as color pattern. Washington, Pennsylvania CBC. Illustration/Donald M. Self.

Additional supplementary documentation such as a voice recording, photograph (black and white or color, although color is always preferred), or videotape can be important supporting evidence. A drawing or sketch of the bird can also provide critical details of sightings. Although many observers feel they have insufficient skill to produce adequate drawings, even a sketch detailing the patterns and markings seen can capture the essence of a bird. A drawing of a diagnostic feature—a wing, head, or mantle, for example, can provide useful supporting evidence.

Presented here are two field sketches from documentation forms this year. We look forward to even more field sketches and more thorough documentation next year!



Whoopers on the rise

It's nice to hear success stories in the nature conservation world when so often all we get is doom and gloom. One triumph has been the increase in the world population of whooping cranes.

In 1941, the population was down to 16, but this winter it will probably exceed 200, perhaps the highest number of these beautiful birds this century.

For more than a decade, biologists have been removing eggs from whooping crane nests in the Canadian flock at Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, and placing them in sandhill crane nests at the Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Idaho, to boost the number of whooping crane nests there. And the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, has been doing a tremendous amount of work to preserve cranes of all types and rebuild their populations. Congratulations to all for their hard work, and especially to the whoopers.