

Green-tailed Towhee

Pipilo chlorurus

near Center, Juniata County, Pennsylvania

Photos by Mark A. McConaughy

23 November 2002

A Green-tailed Towhee was reported as coming to feeders near Center, Juniata County, by Toby Petersheim. I went to see and photograph the bird on Saturday, 23 November 2002. I arrived around 8:30 AM and the bird appeared shortly thereafter. I observed it feeding around the feeders and in a brush pile behind the feeders off and on until about 10 AM.

The bird in question was clearly a Green-tailed Towhee. It was the largest sparrow-like bird coming to the feeders. It was larger than the White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and House Finches that also were frequenting the feeders. The beak of the Towhee was a thick, triangular beak (gtto0612.jpg and gtto0112.jpg). The head was topped with a distinct rufous crown. The face was gray with a small yellowish-green supraloral spot and a yellowish-green to dirty white malar patch (gtto0612.jpg and gtto0112.jpg). There was a more noticeable white throat patch (photo gtto0612.jpg and gtto0112.jpg). The nape, breast, sides and flanks of the bird were gray in color. The belly was a dirty white color (photo gtto0612.jpg and gtto0112.jpg). The back, wings and tail of the bird were gray with greenish highlights (photo gtto0512.jpg). The undertail coverts were a yellowish-green color (photo gtto0512.jpg).

This Towhee differed from Eastern and Spotted Towhees by not having a darker gray head and back (or brown color of females of these species) and it lacked rufous sides and flanks. Although larger than the White-throated Sparrows, it was not as large as would be expected for California, Canyon or Albert's Towhees which would have been much larger than the White-throats. Also, California, Canyon and Albert's Towhees lack the white supraloral, malar and throat patches and greenish highlights seen on this bird. California and Albert's Towhees lack a rufous crown and white belly seen on this specimen. Canyon Towhees have a dark, central breast spot and a "necklace" of dark gray spots/streaks around the neck that are not seen in the Towhee at Petersheim's house.

Most rufous-crowned sparrows (Rufous-crowned, Bachman's, Rufous-winged, American Tree, Field, Chipping, Lark, Swamp) can also be eliminated based on size since they are all smaller than White-throated Sparrows and this bird was larger than the White-throats coming to the feeders. This specimen also lacks a lot of the streaking found on the backs and sides of most sparrows. Only the red form of Fox Sparrow even approaches the size of this bird. However, a red form of Fox Sparrow would be much redder overall than this Towhee and would lack the green highlights, etc.

This bird can only be identified as a Green-tailed Towhee.

Photos of the bird listed above can also be viewed online at:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/MCCONAUGHY/birding/gtto2.htm>

Green-tailed Towhee

The Petersheim residence in the Centre, PA area. Nov 17, 2002

Digiscope shot w/Swarvoski AT-80HD/Coolpix 4500, 1sec f3.4
Matt Orsie Summit Point, WV



Green-tailed Towhee

Pipilo chlorurus

near Center, Juniata County, Pennsylvania

Photos by John Fedak

16 November 2002



A Green-tailed Towhee has been visiting Toby Petersheim's feeders near the town of Center in Juniata County, Pennsylvania. This photo was taken with a digital video camera.



A second photo of the Green-tailed Towhee taken with a digital video camera.

[Return to McConaughy's Birding Page](#)

[Return to McConaughy's Home Page](#)







16
10
10

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Green-tailed Towhee (Pipilo chlorurus)

Date of Sighting: 10 November 2002 to 1 December 2002

Location: CENTER

County: JUNIATA

Observer(s): Toby Petersheim and multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Mark McConaughy, John Fedak, Matt Orsie

Written Description: Yes

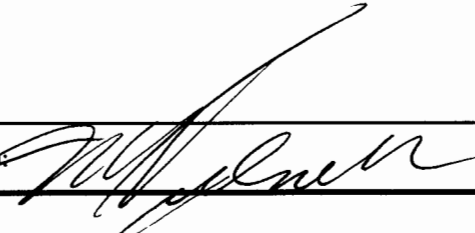
Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Hess	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 1/9/04