

780 - 01 - 2001

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)

Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA

May 12, 2001

by Mike Fialkovich

While participating in the North American Migration Count, I found a female/immature male plumaged Summer Tanager at Schenley Park in Pittsburgh.

The call caught my attention as I am familiar with the call notes of this species. As I searched the trees, I found the bird which appeared to be a female or immature male Summer Tanager. I observed the bird with Jim Valimont who is also familiar with this species. We observed the bird for approximately five minutes from below as it was in the top of a tree. While foraging, it turned to look down and we could see the wings and sides.

Description:

- This bird was recognized as a tanager by size, build, call notes and habits. It was larger and than a warbler or vireo. The bill was not fine like a warbler or vireo, and there were no eye lines, supercilium, or other facial or head markings. The bird lacked streaking and wingbars. The call was the familiar choppy chipping notes of a Summer Tanager. It was also much less active than a warbler, sitting motionless on a branch between foraging activity.
- The head, sides and belly were greenish yellow. As stated above, the bird lacked streaking or facial markings.
- The tail was a bit darker (grayish) than the body. The wings were a bit dusky, but greenish in color. The part of the back I could see when the bird turned was darker greenish yellow than the belly. The wing color did not contrast from the back color.
- The throat showed reddish tones, and the undertail coverts were dull reddish.
- The legs were blackish, and the bill, pale grayish/white. The bill was broad, but longer than a finches bill, and not fine like a warbler's bill.
- I believe this bird was a female. Immature males would show red on the head and throat and the undertail coverts. Eastern females can have reddish coloring on the undertail coverts and other parts of the body.

Voice: the bird did not sing, but it repeatedly produced the common call notes of the summer tanager consisting of a short series of chatters and chips. The call was very different than the familiar "chip burr" call note of the Scarlet Tanager.

I have seen and heard numerous Summer Tanagers in Pennsylvania (Greene County) New Jersey, Delaware, Texas and Arizona.

I have also seen the species listed below (for comparison).

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Comparison with other Tanagers:

Scarlet Tanager: Scarlet Tanagers are very common migrants and summer residents in this area. Female Scarlet Tanagers do not show reddish tones or reddish coloring. The wings of a female scarlet are dusky grayish/black. This bird's wings were not as dark as a female scarlet.

Western Tanager: Western Tanagers have occurred in Pennsylvania, however the reddish tones and lack of wingbars on this bird eliminates this species.

Hepatic Tanager: This species has never occurred in Pennsylvania and the most unlikely species to be seen in the state. Female hepatics show a noticeable grayish auricular patch and lack reddish coloring. This bird's face was plain greenish yellow.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

Date of Sighting: 12 May 2001 to 12 May 2001

Location: SCHENLEY PARK

County: ALLEGHENY

Observer(s): Mike Fialkovich

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Mike Fialkovich

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

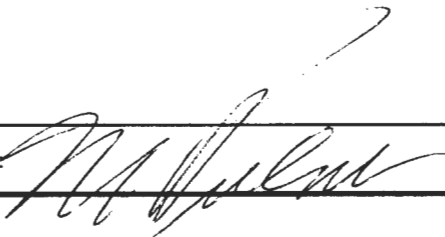
Specimen: No

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. Couchman			X					
P. Hess			X					
J. Stanley			X					
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald <i>R. Leberman</i>			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1/0

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

