



788-01-2002

Black-headed Grosbeak
Lancaster County
Franklin C. Haas

On December 15, 2002, Barb and I were doing our section of the Southern Lancaster County Christmas Bird Count (CBC). One of our regular stops is the Montgomery residence on Bald Eagle Road. They have several active feeders and some nice brushy property for finding sparrows, towhees, etc.

When we parked and got out of the car, Dale Montgomery came out of the house excitedly to tell us they had a "good" bird for us. He told us they had a Black-headed Grosbeak and that it had been coming into their feeders since December 10. They hadn't called anyone because they wanted us to be the first to see it. We told them we appreciated their favoritism, but in the future, please call someone immediately. Luckily, this time, the bird stayed around until the CBC.

Knowing how easy it is to misidentify young Rose-breasted Grosbeaks as Black-headed — we have done this ourselves—I asked him how sure he was of the identification. He said he was very confident and had a photo to prove it! We went inside and looked at the photo that he had taken with his digital camera and downloaded onto his computer. Although the image was small, it appeared to be a black-headed. However, there was a hint of streaking on the breast, which I could not determine whether it was a lighting artifact or actual streaking. A streaked breast is indicative of young rose-breasted.

So we set up our scope (and camera) and waited. About forty minutes later the bird came in and it was obviously a black-headed.

The bird (as seen in the accompanying photograph) was an obvious grosbeak — Short tail, large conical bill, about the size of a Cardinal, two very strong wing patches (bars), distinct face pattern. The wings were black with a very strong large upper white wingbar and a lower large white wing patch. The back was streaked with blackish streaks on a lighter colored background. The throat, breast and belly were bright orange-yellow. The belly area was distinctly more yellow with a central shaft of yellow extending partway up the breast. There was no streaking on the breast or throat. The strong orange-yellow color and the white underside of the tail feathers indicate a male. The line over the eye was buffy-orange, not white as in a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. I did not see the color of the rump.

The bird stayed for several more days, allowing numerous birders to see it.

This appears to be only the second record of this species in Lancaster County. The previous record (which was accepted by PORC) was May 7, 1999 in Manheim by Randy Miller. There have been about a dozen-plus records of the species in the state.

2469 Hammertown Rd.
Narvon, PA 17555

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Black-headed Grosbeak Pheucticus melanocephalus

Date of Sighting: 15 December 2002 to 15 December 2002

Location: BALD EAGLE ROAD

County : LANCASTER

Observer(s): Frank Haas, Barbara Haas

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Frank Haas, Barbara Haas

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

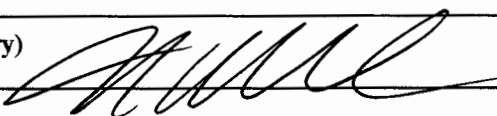
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

4/16/07