

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2016-06-05 16:46:12
Observer's Name	Bill Etter
E-mail	billetter01@gmail.com
Phone	2159643613
Observer's Address	Street Address: 407 S Cigar Rd City: Northampton State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 18067 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Bill Etter
Species (Common Name)	Black-headed Grosbeak
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	First winter male coming into adult plumage
Observation Date and Time	03-21-2016 3:20 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28478643
County	Northampton
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Lower Saucon
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Private residence at 2366 Springtown Hill Rd
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.556199, -75.303600
Habitat	mixed backyard habitat. Woods, garden and open lawn bordered by open field
Viewing conditions	clear and unobstructed through kitchen and dining room windows
Optical equipment used	8x42 Theron bins
Description	In general, a chunky passerine with a large grosbeak type bill, bright collar, throat, breast and belly, otherwise dark to streak. Head had dark auriculars, a broad, bright supercillium and a thinner light median crown stripe. Scapulars and upper coverts darkly streaked, with a bright white median covert / wingbar with black median coverts below. Collar and upper breast were a buffy orange collar, transitioning to a bright yellow lower breast and belly. Upper back was streaked like upper covers, with a paler, almost greenish rump.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

The bird came in to the backyard feeders several times over the hour or so I was there. It ate at the feeder, interacted a bit with the Blue Jays and a Red Squirrel, and perched at the bird bath cooperatively for a few photos.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

This bird had many characteristics of an adult male at this point in the season: in particular, the bold white wing bar and the bright orange breast and yellow belly clearly differentiate it from a first winter female Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which would be the most similar bird in the region. The same eliminates female Purple Finch. As for more superficially similar birds, the massive bill eliminates any type of oriole, crossbill or even Brambling, an even bigger long-shot.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

I've seen many BHGR in all plumages in several states out west over the years. The following has nothing to do with the ID, but the homeowners claimed that to the best of their knowledge, the area where the feeder is located and one third of their house is in Bucks County. Close analysis of local maps, as well as the eBird mapping tool, and websites such as Zillow all show the county line on the far edge of the property, a good 100-200 feet from the feeders. According to these sources, the entire house and the feeding area lay safely within Northampton County. Still, there will probably be reports claiming it in Bucks County. Not really that important, but worth mentioning...

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes

During

none

After

Sibley guide to help eliminate other species

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



[BHGR1.jpg](#)



[BHGR2.jpg](#)



[BHGR3.jpg](#)



[BHGR6.jpg](#)



[BHGR7.jpg](#)



[BHGR9.jpg](#)