

Memo...

790-01-1988

from the desk of

RALPH K. BELL

Phone Area 412—Jefferson, Pa., 883-4505

R. D. 1, Box 229, Clarksville, Pa. 15322

July 3, 1991

Dear Barbara Haas,

I note that you want proof that a Blue Grosbeak was seen here on May 22, 1988 and its good to know that the P.O.R.C. is making an effort to find out what records are really authentic.

Since I have been birding a long time (my first records were in 1927) I have seen people make quick guesses and ^{know} that 2 or more competent birders should see any rare bird.

Therefore, when the second year male (some brown in plumage) was seen here on the farm by members of the Pittsburgh Audubon Society (they found it, I didn't), I had many of them sign saying that they had seen it. A xeroxed copy is enclosed. It was first noted on a dead locust tree branch (on the ground near some briars). It later flew up on to an electric wire and sang (perhaps 25 yards away) and there was no question as to the correct identity. I also saw it.

If there are more questions, please let me know.

Kind regards,

Ralph Bell

P.S. YOU folks are doing a super job with PA. BIRDS.

July 25, 1992
Clarksville, Pa.

✓
FOLL

Dear Barb and Frank,

I was quite interested in the reason for rejecting the Blue Grosbeak record (Pa. Birds, Vol. 6, #1, p21). Since no picture was taken, I would have thought the 35+ birders (and some were excellent birders) would have meant much more than a written discription that could easily have been copied from a bird book.

It was a 2nd year male and first viewed from within 20 yards and observed for perhaps 5 minutes by everyone. Did the Porc committee think we had seen an Indigo Bunting? How experienced birders could have confused a Blue Grosbeak with an Indigo Bunting is hard to believe.

As for myself, my first Indigo Bunting written record was May 21, 1928 and I have banded 323 of them for the U. Fish & Wildlife Service (one was recovered in Jamaica).

As for Blue Grosbeaks, I have even seen their nest in W. Va. where they are not too hard to find in some areas - have even called them in by using the tape recorder.

I don't really blame your PORC committe for being skeptical because I have seen plenty of so-called records published that seemed doubtful to me. Even one of your PORC committee members misidentified a species before 1978. And George Hall published a summer Blue Grosbeak record in Am. Birds for western Greene County (that someone had reported to him). After seeing the report, I checked the area and saw and heard nothing but Indigo Buntings. I doubt the record very much because the habitat wasn't right.

Enough said. R.K.B.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Blue Grosbeak**

Date of Sighting: **22 May 1988**

Observer(s): **Ralph Bell, et.al.**

Date of Submission: **1991**

Submitted by: **Ralph Bell**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater							X
B. Haas *							
F. Haas *							
R. Leberman		X					
G. McWilliams							X
S. Santner				X			
P. Schwalbe						X	
TOTALS		1		1		1	2
DECISION				X			

Comments: *Abstain

Signature (Secretary): *Bm Haas*

Date: *3/7/92*