

790-01-1991

V5-3

BLUE GROSBEAK IN NORTHAMPTON COUNTY by Rick Wiltraut

On July 30, 1991 I was banding nestling Eastern Bluebirds (Sialia sialis) at the Little Gap Bird Observatory, Northampton County, Pennsylvania when I heard what I presumed was a male Purple Finch (Carpodacus purpureus) singing nearby. Although Purple Finches regularly nest near Penn Forest Reservoir a few miles to the north in Carbon County, I thought it was unusual to find one in song on top of the Blue Mountain in July. I soon located the singer at the top of a tree and when I looked at it through my binoculars, I was astonished to see a male Blue Grosbeak (Guiraca caerulea). The entire bird was deep blue in color except for two rusty wingbars on each wing. The bird was larger than an Indigo Bunting (Passerina cyanea) and appeared to be about the same size as the adult Eastern Bluebirds nearby. It had a very large conical beak with a noticeable silver lower mandible. It flew from the tree and landed in a stand of phragmites nearby, offering me excellent looks. As the bird perched on one of the stalks, it twitched its tail from side to side and sang its warbled song. I observed the bird for approximately 5 minutes through 10x40 binoculars at distances between 50-150 feet before it flew north and out of sight.

The area was a powerline cut with tall grasses bordered by second-growth woods of pine, oak and laurel. The elevation here is about 1400 feet.

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There are three previous records of Blue Grosbeaks in Northampton County, including two sightings in August, 1990 near the southeastern corner of the county. My previous experience with the species includes male birds seen in Arizona and at Pymatuning Lake and Tinicum N.W.R. in Pennsylvania.

Since the Blue Grosbeak is slowly extending its breeding range northward, birders in the northern counties should check out any "Purple Finches" they hear singing in Blue Grosbeak habitat.

205 Washington St.
Nazareth, PA 18064

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Blue Grosbeak**

Date of Sighting: **30 July 1991**

Observer(s): **Rick Wiltraut**

Date of Submission: **1991**

Submitted by: **Rick Wiltraut**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman			X				
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS			7				
DECISION			X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Bm Haas

Date:

3/7/92