













PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

791-01-2009

Send documentation to:
Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpulcinella@verizon.net

SPECIES: Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*)
Subspecies N/A

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS one **SEX** male

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable):

Subadult plumage (not full breeding plumage); similar to photo of immature male first spring photo pg 435 in Donald and Lillian Stokes Field Guide to Western Birds (Western Region) 1996 edition.

DATE OF OBSERVATION

This bird was a daily visitor to my backyard bird feeder from 4 pm on January 29, 2009 until February 8, 2009 at 1 pm.

LOCATION 516 North Fourth Street, Catawissa, PA 17820

EXACT SITE

At a bird feeder approximately 5m to the rear of the house at 516 North Fourth Street

OBSERVER REPORTING:

John Slotterback
516 North Fourth Street
Catawissa, PA 17820
Phone: 570-356-3431
Email: jkeoni2@yahoo.com

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

Fred Rogers, Karol and Mark Pasquinelli, Marion Zuefle, William P. Brown

HABITAT

Backyard on edge of town, close to 3 acre patch of woods, approximately one acre unmowed field.

DISTANCE TO BIRD : as close as 4-5 meters

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you)

Excellent; observed under many light and weather conditions over the course of many days

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED

Binoculars, telephoto camera lens

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual):

Overall, about the size of a large sparrow. As mentioned, at first glance at my feeder I thought it was a bluebird because of the orange and blue coloration. However, the white wing bars stood out and guided me to look closer.

The bird had a bright blue on back and face. This bird was not full adult breeding plumage, because it did not have a mostly blue head. It seemed to have the brightest blue on the rump, even going down into the tail feathers. The back was a buffy brown color. There were fuzzy brown feathers coming down to partly obscure the wing bars. There was a dark lore region. The chest and flanks had an orange/brown color, and the belly back to the undertail coverts was white. The yellow sparrow-shaped bill showed it to be a seed-eater.

Plumage similar to photos I checked out on the internet for other LABU sightings; included with first LABU record for PA (Mrs. Yelk) and the Apr 2004 sighting.

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

The bird was feeding a lot on millet (one photo I took showed a piece flying out his mouth as he scolded another bird (a pine siskin) away.

At the feeders, he seemed to be a fairly aggressive bird for his size. Among feeder birds he was able to chase away male cardinal a couple times (though sometime cardinal chased him), white-breasted nuthatch, tufted titmouse, junco, pine siskins. Birds that chased him were the song sparrow, and sometimes the white-throated sparrow.

It seems like he approached my feeders from the direction of the woodlot, first appearing in some low shrubs, then to the feeder. In good weather he would perch pretty much in the open on a branch of a walnut tree. He would show up throughout the day but most predictably showed up around 4 pm each day.

VOCALIZATIONS

None, other than scolding type calls when other birds approached at feeder

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:

Photograph : 5 photos are attached to give different views/ perspectives. Raw unaltered images are available if needed.

Photographers:

William P. Brown [photos wpb 1, wpb 2, wpb 3]
254 East Walnut Street
Kutztown, PA 19530
wpbrown23@yahoo.com

Sally Slotterback [photos sas 1, sas 2]
24 Lenker Street
Ashland, PA 17921
whippoorwill@hotmail.com

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

N/A

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others)

At first glance, seeing brown and blue colors I thought it was an early-for-the-season bluebird. However, when I spotted the bright wingbars I knew that it couldn't be a bluebird, because I am very familiar with bluebirds after putting out bluebird houses since a child and having them as a favorite

bird. Upon closer inspection, bill was sparrow-like unlike the thin bluebirds bill that is used to catch insects.

DISCUSSION

After realizing that this bird should now be on the west coast of Mexico and not central Pennsylvania I pondered the question. I recollected that only a day or two earlier on the weather channel I saw a very long frontal boundary that stretched from Texas all the way diagonally up to Pennsylvania. It is my hypothesis that he might have been blown up here as a result of wind patterns associated with that storm.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES

I used to work as a wildlife biologist out west (Montana and Washington) doing bird surveys so I am familiar with the bird. While at the University of Montana I used to attend presentations by Erick Greene who has done a lot of work on this species

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? (why or why not)

Yes. Prior experience with birds and bird expert friends who also saw the bird

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

National geographic, Stokes field guide to western birds, and Peterson field guide to birds; internet sites [google images, etc].

DATE OF THIS REPORT: June 9, 2009

Submitted by: John W. Slotterback

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Lazuli Bunting Passerina amoena

Date of Sighting: 29 January 2009 to 8 February 2009

County : COLUMBIA

Location : CATAWISSA

Observer(s): John Slotterback et al.

Date of Submission: 2009

Submitted by: Sally Slotterback, William Brown

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							
B. Coulter	X							
C. Rutt	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

8/17/09