

861-02-1990

PORE

rec'd 2/13/91

1/25/91

On November 14, 1990, at about 1:00 PM three birds flew into my open feeder and stayed there for about 5 minutes, feeding. At first I didn't pay much attention to them because there were brown-headed cowbirds, a few grackles, and red-wing blackbirds feeding on the ground under the feeders. A second glance told me that they were something different. They were larger than the cowbirds, being about the same size as the redwings, but smaller than the grackles. They also appeared to be a bit plumper or rounder looking than the grackles, with shorter tails. The eyes of all three birds were light- it was difficult to tell if they were yellow or white - but they definitely were not dark. Two of the birds were black with a purplish shine to their heads and a very distinct contrast to the back and rest of the body. The light gave that part a sort of shiny grey-green look. The other bird had an almost brownish appearance to its head and upper body, with the rest of the body giving an almost mottled look. The bills were dark and appeared a little thicker than the grackles and also looked to be shorter.

These three birds flew to the ground after awhile and fed there along with the other birds for about 10 more minutes. They were feeding on a mixture of millets, sunflower seeds, and cracked corn. I think I also put a little thistle seed into that feeder too. When they were on the ground the contrast between them and the other species was extremely evident. The day was sunny and I was about 30 feet away from them using Swift 8½ X 44 Swift Audubon binoculars. I concluded rather quickly that these birds indeed were Brewer's blackbirds. (males)

I didn't see anything more of these birds for a long time and frankly didn't expect to. But on Friday, December 28, at about 11:15 AM, a male Brewer's blackbird flew into my open feeder again, fed for only about a few minutes, flew into one of the apple trees, and disappeared into the cornfield below the house. The day before we had had 10 inches of snow and my feeders were swamped with flocks of icterids - redwings, cowbirds, starlings, and grackles. But this bird came in when the rest of the blackbirds were not there or at least not near the feeding area. There were the usual house finches, sparrows, chickadees, etc., but it seemed to avoid the other blackbirds.

The next day on the Bethlehem area Christmas count I and Bernie Morris and Pauline England were seated in front of the sliding glass doors looking out at the feeders at about 2 PM when the bird once again flew in, fed for maybe a minute, flew into the apple tree, and once again flew down into the cornfield. I didn't say anything at first because I wanted to see if they would see the bird and identify it first, which they did.

They day after that, Sunday, December 30, both Dave DeReamus of Bath, PA, and Babe Webster, from near Lake Nockamixon, saw the bird feeding in my yard. I was not home - I was doing the Hamburg Christmas Count. It was seen by me on the next two mornings for about three minutes each day. It would make only a very short stop at the feeder area and disappear in the cornfield. I didn't see it again until after another snowfall on January 12, when it repeated the exact same pattern - in and out of the feeder area - at 11 AM. I have not seen it since.

Arlene

Arlene Koch

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # | of

Species: **Brewer's Blackbird**

Date of Sighting: **November 14, 1990 - January 12, 1991**

Observer(s): **Arlene Koch**

Date of Submission: **1991 Northampton**

Submitted by: **Arlene Koch**

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			6				1
DECISION			X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

B. Haas

Date:

8-15-91