

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: (2) Brewer's Blackbird Date of this Observation: 24 Oct. 1999Date Found: 10/24/99 Last Date Seen: 10/24/99Location: Moraine State ParkTownship/City: _____ County: ButlerPerson Writing this report: Paul HessAddress: 1412 Hawthorne St.Watrona Heights PA Phone: 724-226-2323Other Observers: see attached list¹⁵⁰⁶⁵Who found the bird first: Paul Hess

Other documentation Included: (Circle all appropriate items)(Make sure all attached items are fully labeled)

Photograph

Audio Recording

Video Recording

If a Specimen, where is it stored? _____

Description: (Attach additional pages as needed—Please do not write on back of this form)

Documentation for PORC attached,

861-03-1999 + 861-04-1999

DOCUMENTATION OF SINGLE-OBSERVER SIGHT RECORD

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) -- 1 female and 1 male

DATE: 24 October 1999

TIME: 1215-1250

LOCATION: Moraine State Park, Butler County, Pa.

HABITAT: Shrubs and woodland edge along the shore of Lake Arthur.

DOCUMENTING OBSERVER: Paul Hess, 1412 Hawthorne St.
Natrona Heights, PA 15065

OTHER OBSERVERS: Val & Jean Baker, Randi & Sarah Gerrish,
Robert Machesney, Jack & Sue Solomon
(These were not independent observers,
because we all discussed what we saw.)

WEATHER AND LIGHT: Overcast after passage of a strong cold front;
temperature in low 40s, but this spot was sheltered from the wind.

DISTANCE AND DIRECTION RELATIVE TO OBSERVER: Mainly at distances
from 20 to 30 yards, and at varying angles from the ground to about
45 degrees above eye level.

OPTICS: Leica 8 x 32 (Machesney also used a scope to confirm in the
dull overcast light conditions that the female had a dark eye.)

BEHAVIOR: Both birds spent the entire 35 minutes of our observation
in a flock of about 40 Rusty Blackbirds that were flying around,
landing in the trees and bushes, and feeding on the ground. At the
end of our sighting we watched the two sit together in the same
tree, apart from the milling flock, for about 5 minutes.

DESCRIPTION OF FEMALE:

* Body plumage -- dull grayish brown with no notable markings;
throat and breast lightest; wings, back, tail, and belly darkest.
All the plumage had a subtle greenish tint (not a gloss but a dull
tinge) that I and Val Baker noticed independently.

* Head -- The light brown face had no markings except a faint
narrow buffy supercilium. Crown and nape were darker brown.

* Eye -- dark brown, confirmed as noted in Machesney's scope
to make certain we were not missing a light color in the dull
lighting conditions.

* Bill -- Medium length, sharply pointed and slightly
downcurved at the end; roughly the same shape but noticeably
shorter than the Rusty Blackbirds' bills.

* General shape -- Slimmer, much less robust in the breast,
and more "streamlined" than the Rusty Blackbirds, with a relatively
longer and narrower tail.

DESCRIPTION OF MALE:

* Head and body plumage -- entirely jet black, with a slightly glossy appearance at certain angles of light and with no trace of rusty. A couple of times when the angle of view apparently was right, the head briefly showed a purplish gloss even in the dull light. However, no trace of any color sheen was ever visible on the body.

* Eye -- bright whitish, contrasting sharply with black face.

* Bill and general shape -- as described for female.

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES:

Female -- From Rusty Blackbird by dark eye, unmarked face without dark lores and auriculars, shorter bill, unmarked body plumage, and conspicuously slimmer and longer-tailed shape. (Some first-basic Rusties are said to retain dark eyes sometimes into early fall, but this bird had a full combination of other Brewer's features.) From female Brown-headed Cowbird by longer and sharp pointed bill, and much slimmer and longer-tailed shape. From female Bronzed Cowbird by absence of a red eye, slimmer bill, and longer and slimmer tail. From female Shiny Cowbird by longer and slimmer appearance, and longer and slightly down-curved bill. From Red-winged Blackbird by lack of any markings on the body plumage. Finally, no other female blackbird shows the subtle, dull, non-glossy greenish plumage tint, a typical character not mentioned in field guides though Al Jaramillo notes it in *New World Blackbirds*.

Male -- From male Rusty Blackbird by entirely jet black body and head with no trace of rusty or buffy color anywhere, purplish gloss seen briefly on the head, slimmer and longer-tailed shape, and slightly shorter bill. From grackles of all species by shorter bill, smaller size, and daintier appearance. From Bronzed Cowbird and Shiny Cowbird by the light eye. From male Brown-headed Cowbird by slimmer body, longer bill, and black head. From Red-winged Blackbird by absence of red on the wing and by the bright eye.

COMMENTS: Importantly in direct comparison with the Rusties, we had leisurely looks at both of these birds from a variety of distances and angles. When I first noticed the female, her unmarked plumage and dark eye appeared instantly different from the Rusties -- which the other birders quickly saw as well. Similarly when the male was spotted about 10 minutes later, its completely black plumage was conspicuous to everyone among the Rusties.

EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Brewer's Blackbird was the most abundant resident bird in my yard, neighborhood, and region when I grew up in suburban Los Angeles. I saw tens of thousands there, and have seen hundreds since then in the west and midwest.

This report is written 25 October 1999, with the description taken from notes made immediately after the observation.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

Date of Sighting: 24 October 1999 to 24 October 1999

Location: MORaine STATE PARK

County: BUTLER

Observer(s): Paul Hess, Val Baker, Jean Baker, Randi Gerrish, Sarah Gerrish,
Robert Machesney, Jack Soloman, Sue Soloman

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Paul Hess

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

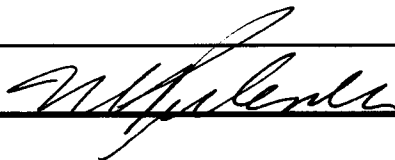
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Couchman			X					
P. Hess								X
R. Ickes			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6					1
DECISION			X					

Comments: Male 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/27/01