













874A - 01 - 2000

**Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)
Mt. Joy, Lancaster County, PA
February 12, 2000**

by Mike Fialkovich

As a subscriber to the Pennsylvania Birds Listserv, I read with interest the reports of a female/immature Bullock's Oriole coming to a feeder at the home of Mike Gockley in Mt. Joy, PA. As the reports became regular, I was interested in seeing this bird, and eventually made the trip with Walt and Dana Shaffer and Joyce Hoffmann on February 12, 2000.

We arrived at approximately 10:30 a.m. and the bird appeared after only a five minute wait. We observed it feeding on suet for approximately 5 minutes after which it flew into a White Pine on the other side of the yard and was out of sight. We waited for several minutes and the bird returned. I was hoping to study it for a second time to ensure I could see all the details of the bird's plumage so I could be sure for myself it was a Bullock's and so I could write a detailed description which is so vital for acceptance of this species.

We observed the bird for approximately 10 minutes as it fed on suet and sunflower seeds. It repositioned itself on the suet feeder several times so I could see it from several angles. I also observed it as it flew to the sunflower feeder and as it flew off after feeding.

Description:

- The bird was recognizable as an oriole by the medium length sharp bill, size, plumage, and slim build. It was about the size of a Red-winged Blackbird, but slimmer and longer tailed. The bill was similar to a red-winged, but longer and not as conical. The yellowish and blackish plumage, with two white wing bars were also features to guide me to identify this bird as a female/immature oriole.
- Head: The crown and nape were dusky olive-brown. The sides of the face were a dull yellow. A black line ran from the rear of the eye onto the cheek. The lores were blackish. The bill was grayish, rather long, medium sized, and sharply pointed.
- Back, wings, and tail: The back was the same dusky olive-brown as the crown. The back showed faint blackish marks, but this did not result in a bold pattern or mottling. The tail was dusky-olive yellow with some black edging to the feathers.
- The wings were dusky gray (a bit darker than the back) with two white wing bars. The wingbar at the shoulder showed a serrated or wavy upper edge formed from black feather centers on the median coverts.

Bullock's Oriole Description
Mt. Joy, Lancaster County

- The second wingbar was formed by the white tips of the greater coverts. This wingbar was not defined as well as the upper due to the white which extended from the tips along the edges on the greater coverts which formed a broken whitish wing patch between the two wing bars.
- Underparts: The throat and upper breast were dull yellow. The lower breast, sides and belly were white. The undertail coverts were also dull yellow.

Separation from Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*):

Dull plumaged immature/female Baltimore Orioles can be similar to female/immature Bullock's Orioles.

This bird lacked the dusky sides to the face which Baltimores show. Baltimore Orioles show a darker crown than Bullock's and this color extends to the sides of the face.

This bird showed a dark line extending behind the eye, and the lores were blackish. Baltimores do not show this due to their darker faces.

Although some Baltimores in this plumage are white on the lower breast, sides and belly, the color on the undertail coverts, upper breast, and throat is dull orange. This bird showed dull yellow color in these areas with no hint of orange. Also, Baltimores show dull orange on the undertail coverts which extends onto the flanks; this bird's undertail coverts were dull yellow and the color was confined to that area.

The wingbars on this bird were also typical of Bullock's. The wavy upper wing bar and less defined lower wingbar with white feather edges to the feathers between the two are typical of Bullock's. Baltimore Orioles in this age/plumage show two well defined wingbars--the upper with smaller black feather centers resulting in a wingbar which lacks the deep wavy pattern seen in a Bullock's.

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RARE SPECIES REPORT

874A-01-2000

SPECIES: Bullock's Oriole - <i>Icterus bullockii</i>		NUMBER SEEN: one
SIGHTING DATE: 15 Jan. 2000		SIGHTING TIME: 2:12 - 4pm.
LOCATION:	COUNTY & STATE: Lanc. Pa. DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: 1211 Wissler Rd Mt. Joy - Mike Gockley resident. DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE:	
HABITAT: Back yard with mature Russian Olive (apx 15) Large white Pine trees and a few other deciduous trees.		
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: partly cloudy DISTANCE: 15 ft to 90 ft. EQUIP. USED: 10x50 Swift LENGTH OF SIGHTING: 2:12pm - 4pm	
DESCRIPTION:	VOICE: not heard SIZE: apx. 8" long PLUMAGE: Dull yellow above the bill, face, and upper chest. Dark grey eye line. Yellow-grey supercilium - Not very much contrast but visible. Olive-grey crown that started above the eye and the color extended to the whole back. Light grey flanks, chest and belly. Undertail coverts yellow-grey. Light grey rump. Medium length tail had dull yellow edges on dark grey feathers. - back page cont. ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): medium bill - upper mandible blackish, lower mandible medium grey. Legs blackish, Black eyes BEHAVIOR: feeding on suet, Black oil Sunflower, and millet seeds.	
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES: I have never seen an imm. female Bullock's Oriole in winter. I had to check with field guides before I saw this bird so I knew what to look for.		
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES: The upper wing bar of a female Baltimore Oriole is not deeply indented and the lower white bar does not extend up the leading edge of the greater coverts. No orange on this bird. No yellow or orange rump as in Baltimore Oriole.		
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? Yes		IF SO, BY WHO? Mike Gockley
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who? Bruce Carl Ann Mease? Jonathan Heller		
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space):		
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: Randy C. Miller		
ADDRESS: 607 Woodland Dr. Manheim PA 17545		PHONE # (717) 664-3778
SIGNATURE Randy C. Miller		DATE: 16 Jan. 2000

Dark grey wing with two wing bars of white. The medium coverts were deeply serrated. The tips of the greater coverts extended the length of the leading edge

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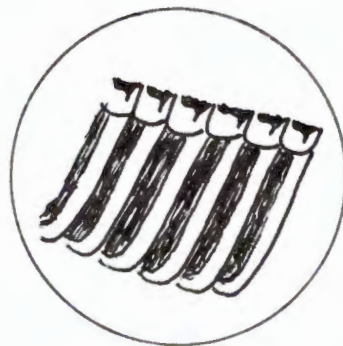
FEMALE BULLOCK'S ORIOLE

JANUARY 16, 2000

MOUNT JOY, PA.

SUBMITTED BY Tom Hanner

VIEWED UNDER FAVORABLE
CONDITIONS INTERMITTENTLY
OVER A 6 HOUR PERIOD



WING PATTERN

LEG COLOR: DARK GRAY/BLACK

BILL COLOR: UPPER MANDIBLE DARK GRAY/BLACK
LOWER MANDIBLE WITH FLESHY TONES

EYE COLOR: DID NOT NOTICE

DESCRIPTION: DULL YELLOW ON UPPER BREAST,
SIDES OF FACE, SUPERCILIUM, AND
UNDERTAIL COVERTS.

REST OF UNDERPARTS AND BELLY
PALE GRAY, SMALL AREA OF GRAY AT
CHIN.

GRAY LINE FROM BILL THROUGH
EYE, GRAYISH CROWN WITH DULL YELLOW
WASH AT FOREHEAD.

BACK GRAY WITH DARKER OBSCURE
MARKINGS, RUMP GRAY CONTRASTING WITH
TAIL.

TAIL DULL YELLOW ABOVE AND BELOW,
WITH ORANGE HUE IN GOOD LIGHT WHEN
BIRD WOULD SPREAD ITS TAIL.

WINGS DARK GRAY WITH OBVIOUS UPPER
WING-BAR WITH BLACK SERRATIONS ALONG
TOP (AT TIMES SERRATIONS COULD BE HIDDEN
BY OTHER FEATHERS), LOWER WING-BAR MORE
SUBTLE AND CONNECTED TO UPPER WING-BAR
WITH OBVIOUS WHITE EDGINGS.

SEE ABOVE

Field Marks Identified on Possible BULLOCK'S ORIOLE
Sighted at the Home of Michael and Linda Gockley Mount Joy, Pa.

BREAST:

The under parts being an off-white - light gray, is what first caught my eye, and made me look farther than Baltimore. The pale yellow chin, throat and very upper breast gives way to the off-white - light gray.

FACE:

The yellow wash from the throat extends up into the cheek, and continues back into the ear. There is a faint, but definite, eye stripe and a pale supercillium. The lighting conditions in which the bird is viewed, is very critical in defining these field marks.

TAIL:

The under tail coverts are colored with a faint Yellow.

HEAD and BACK:

The head and back are a very uniform gray, with a faint saddle (see photo's), and a few very pale markings on the outer back. The back markings on the female Baltimore at Bob Schutsky's are very dark and pronounced.

UPPER WING BAR:

The upper edge of the wing bar has very distinct and heavy black saw-toothed markings. Again, if the bird is fluffed, these markings are not as visible, as when it's in its normal position.

LOWER WING BAR:

The lower wing bar shows the lower edge of white, extending up the wing, towards the upper wing bar. This makes the area between the wing bars very pale.

The overall pale appearance of the bird sets it apart from the female Baltimore that is visiting Bob's feeder. This obvious paleness is usually the first thing that most observers mention first. The second most noticed by observers is the distinct black saw-tooth markings on the upper wing bar, along with the amount of white between the wing bars. After viewing both birds, and finding no similarities, except obvious shape, that this is a legitimate Bullock's Oriole.

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Sighting of Possible BULLOCK'S ORIOLE
Home of Michael and Linda Gockley

I first caught sight of the bird on Sunday Jan. 9, 2000, for about 15 seconds, at 4:45 P.M. It was sitting back in the russian olives i have planted behind the house. The bird left and did not return that evening.

Due to my wife's and my schedule, we were not able to be home during daylight hours until Friday the 15th. The only thing i noticed about the bird that Sunday, was that there was pale yellow on the bird. When i got home from work about 1:30 P.M., Linda said she saw the bird that i saw. It had been frequenting the suet feeder most of the morning.

As we were looking through the Peterson,s Field Guide trying to find the bird she had been watching, it suddenly showed up on the suet feeder. After a good look, i quickly knew it was an Oriole. The bird was only fifteen feet away, and stayed for three or four minutes, and continued to visit the suet, house and tube feeders for the remainder of the afternoon.

The first thing that caught my attention was the lack of color on the belly. The yellow on the cheek and throat quickly faded into an off-white - light gray on the belly. This according to Peterson,s Guide suggested BULLOCK,S. The second outstanding field mark were the heavy black sawtooth serrations on the upper wing bars.

I gave Bruce Carl a call, and told him what we had noticed on the bird, and what i thought we were seeing. He contacted some others and posted it on PA BIRDS.

I continued to observe the bird Saturday morning, and gave Bruce a call to let him know it was still around. He , Randy Miller, Ann Mease and Jonathan Heller came to the house about 1:30 P.M., and we studied the bird for the next two and one half hours. We now had the National Geographic 3rd Edition field guide as a reference. We were all in agreement to all the field marks observed, and all led to the identification being a FEMALE BULLOCK'S.

On Sunday morning Deuane Hoffman and Carolyn Blatchley were by early and saw the bird about 8:30 A.M. and as Deuane wrote in his posting on PABIRDS (enclosed), the bird shows all the attributes of a BULLOCK'S.

Later in the morning Tom Garner and Jerry Book showed up and again she obliged by showing up often. Tom brought along the August 1998 Issue of Birding Magazine with the article on FIELD IDENTIFICATION OF FEMALE and IMATURE BULLOCK'S and BALTIMORE ORIOLES. There is also the answers to a previous photo quiz on orioles. We viewed the bird from outside and than went into my kitchen and studied her from close range and better light, also from the bedroom, which gave us a different angle.

After studing the Birding Magazine Article and the National Geographic 3rd Edition Field Guide, each time the bird came to feed, we focused on just one field mark, the same as the five of us did on Saturday afternoon. Peter Robinson was also there this morning.

On Saturday January 29, 2000, Bruce Carl and myself once again studied the bird for four feeding visits, and than proceeded to Bob Schutsky's home and spent two and one half hours studing the female Baltimore oriole that has been visiting his feeder since January 1st. I showed Bob the photo's i have taken of my oriole and he said " don't expect to see anything like this when my oriole shows up. From the photo's he could see all of the bullock's ID markings.

Sighting of Possible BULLOCK'S ORIOLE
Home of Michael and Linda Gockley

We first saw his oriole high in an evergreen, and even from there, there was no resemblance to my oriole. Then it made it's way toward the fruit feeder, and you could really see the difference, as it sat and ate grape jelly ten feet from us. This bird is so contrasting with the yellom-orange all the way down the belly. No facial color, heavily scalloped down the back, no black sawtooth markings on the top edge of the upper wing bar, and very contrasting wing bars.

We left Bob's and returned to my home and once again studied my oriole. Bob Schutsky came about 2:45 P.M., and the bird came to feed about three minutes later. Bob studied the bird at length, and i have enclosed a copy of his thoughts he posted on PABIRDS.

The best viewing of the bird in the best light conditions is from my dining room - kitchen, and if you have any doubts, i wish you would come and study the bird from here. My home is open and you will always be welcome.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Gockley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael E. Gockley

HAPPY BIRDING

874-A-01-2000

Bruce & Sherri Carl

From: <SierraGS@AOL.COM>
To: <PABIRDS@LIST.AUDUBON.ORG>
Sent: Sunday, January 16, 2000 12:16 PM
Subject: Re: Immature (female) Bullock's Oriole

Many thanks to Mike Gockley and Bruce Carl for making public the sighting of an immature (female) Bullock's Oriole. Deuane Hoffman and I took a Sunday morning trip to Mount Joy, and after a short period, she showed up!

She certainly had yellow in her throat and breast, on the face, and the feathers on the tail from below. There was grey/olive across the top of her head and down the back, ending at the yellow supercilium. The eyeline was visible, and the white of the median covert bar was distinctive while the wing bars were not as contrasting as a Baltimore.

As Bruce pointed out, it is easily seen by stepping onto the edge of the property (left of the house) and looking into the back yard. Mike did come out to greet us, and his schedule the last week did not permitted him to spend much time looking / observing patterns of arrival. It seems to be a sure thing around 2:15 PM, but we were excited that she chose to feed around 8:30 AM today. I observed her in the olive tree to the left of the feeders before she came into clear view at the suet feeder where Deuane confirmed it. She gave us a few good minutes of show before heading left, presumably back into the olive tree.

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HAPPY BIRDING!

Carolyn Blatchley
 Harrisburg, Dauphin Co.

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 For help on LISTSERV, visit <<http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/userindex.html>>.

874A-01-2000

Bruce & Sherri Carl

From: "Raven" <raven@PAONLINE.COM>
To: <PABIRDS@LIST.AUDUBON.ORG>
Sent: Sunday, January 16, 2000 6:30 PM
Subject: Lancaster Co. Bullock's

Howdy All,

I wanted to pass on a few notes on the sighting this morning of the female Bullock's oriole that is coming to the feeders in Mt. Joy, PA.

The bird displays all of the attributes of a bullock's and if it is proven otherwise I would be most intrigued as to why. As Carolyn stated in her post the bird has a olive-gray crown that ends at a bright supercillium. It also has a distinct blackish eye stripe. The breast is washed with a yellowish-orange and fades out to off-white down at the belly. The undertail coverts are washed yellowish as well. The white on the wing coverts was distinctive with the black of the upper wing coverts forming a row of "teeth" marks on the white median covert bar. The wing bars were very indistinct and by no means as contrasting as a baltimores would be.

In my humble opinion this bird is a good bullocks oriole. I know that the separation of female bullocks and baltimores can be difficult at times...this bird however seems to pose no problem with sufficient study.

The home owner, Mike Glockley, was very hospitable and was delighted to share the bird with us before he and his wife went off for sunday worship...Mikes schedule is very consuming and he does not have alot of daylight hours at home to look for or at the bird. I am overjoyed he and his wife had the forethought to spread the word of their sighting. Mike stated he wasnt really sure what species of oriole it was before he reported it but figured that any oriole in January in PA was worth calling about...good thinking Mike!!!

Take care and Good birding,

Raven

a.k.a. Deuane Hoffman

Harrisburg, PA, Dauphin Co.

raven@paonline.com

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For help on LISTSERV, visit <<http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/userindex.html>>.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

Date of Sighting: 9 January 2000 to 15 February 2000

Location: MT. JOY

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Mike Gockley, Bruce Carl, Randy Miller, Tom Garner, Mike Fialkovich
Deuane Hoffman, Carolyn Blatchley

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Mike Gockley, Bruce Carl, Randy Miller, Tom Garner, Mike Fialkovich
Deuane Hoffman, Carolyn Blatchley

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

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: 6/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/27/01