

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-02-27 13:26:41
Observer's Name	Michael Slater
E-mail	paplantings@gmail.com
Phone	6107753757
Observer's Address	4411 New Holland RD Mohnton Pennsylvania 19540 United States
Names of additional observers	Many, many others.(over 1500) See the eBirdamong others
Species (Common Name)	Black-Backed Oriole
Species (Scientific Name)	Icturus abeleii
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	adult male
Observation Date and Time	02-02-2017 1:00 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/pa/view/checklist/S34130177
County	Berks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Lower Heidelberg Twp.
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	20 Indiana Ave., Sinking Spring, PA 19608
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.3325453,-76.0384342
Habitat	Suburban yard.
Distance to bird	about 50-75 ft. at first sighting
Viewing conditions	Bright, partly overcast day.
Optical equipment used	Zeiss 8x 42 bins. Panasonic FZ200 camera
Description	Oriole. Colors yellow/orange, Black and White. Impression before looking at photos was of a bird which was very black above and on the sides, except for the large white wing patches and bright orange yellow below. Appear to be very dark above for a Bullock's oriole. The short orange "eyebrow" line the extends from the bill to the eye and not beyond is very distinctive. See photos.

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

I heard about the bird and went to see it as soon as I could, which was noon on Feb. 2nd. At 1:05 it came to the front bird feeder at the Hybki's house (#20 Indiana Ave.), where they had been seeing it since Jan. 26th. They have some pics of it taken through their living-room window with Sue Hybki's iPad to the feeder about 5 feet from the window facing Indiana Ave. I watched it for about 15 seconds then got out of my car to try to get a pic of it and it flew to the crab-apple tree in front of #18 Indiana Ave, where I couldn't see it. after a minute or so it left the tree and flew to the birdbath at the back-left corner of #20 where I got some photos, then it flew up to a bare tree behind #20 where I got some more photos.

Since the initial sighting people have seen the bird around the neighborhood perched in trees, eating at feeders and flying high over the street. The original bird food the Hybkis had out is a Nut 'n Berry mix with raisins, dried cranberries, raw peanuts, pumpkin seeds, safflower seeds. I took them some oranges to put out and then a few days later seedless red grapes. The oriole likes the grapes and oranges and seems to eat several of the seeds/nuts too. It eats some smaller seeds on the tray but then occasionally takes a raw peanut to a nearby Forsythia bush or tree branch to peck at and eat while holding it with one foot against the branch. Attached are several picture from 2/21/17 one of the birds back by me (Mike Slater) and several of the front by Rob Cordes. (Note I should have large versions of Rob Cordes' pics available soon)

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

The Identification was first made by Michael Retter on the Facebook group "Advanced Bird ID" (Thanks Michael!) as an adult Black-backed Oriole, *Icturus abeleii*. It clearly and unambiguously matches the descriptions and pictures in Mexican Field guides. The bird's black auricular area and black flanks separate it from Bullock's Oriole. The Black flanks, all black back, large white wing patch and white primary feather edges and black throat-patch surrounded by orange/yellow separate it from Baltimore oriole males. At different times this species has been lumped with Baltimore oriole and Bullock's Oriole but it is currently considered to be a separate species, but most closely related to Baltimore Oriole. No other Mexican or central American species matches this bird at all. Many people who have seen the bird and/or pictures of it who are familiar with it in Mexico agree on the identification.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

Additional Info I have collected which may bear on the provenance of this bird.

The bird acts wild and is somewhat shy and flies if people get too close or move quickly.

There are no U.S.A. or Canadian zoos or aviaries listed as holding this species per Robert S. Mulvihill at the National Aviary and Greg Neise hasn't reported and indication of captives for sale in the US either from his checking.

According to Bill Urich of the Reading Eagle newspaper 3

"The fact that the black-backed oriole is found only in central Mexico and is not a long-distance migrant raised red flags.

"Arguments that the bird arrived here unassisted by humans center on the many active storms that swept through Mexico over the last several months, carrying with them a number of birds not normally found in the Northeast.

Because Berks County has a growing Mexican population, it could be argued that the bird was an escapee from a local home.

I asked reporter Anthony Orozco, who covers Latino issues as part of his beat, whether members of the local Mexican community tend to keep birds as pets.

He replied that in his experience visiting many local Mexican homes, he has never encountered any birds as house pets, noting that dogs are the preferred pet."

Additionally Bill told me (Personal Communication) that Anthony added the information that

"Latinos from the "Islands" (i.e. Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic) like to keep birds as pets",

but they are unlikely to have access to this endemic Mexican species.

I emailed Dr. Kevin Omland at the University of Maryland who has done genetic work on this species and his reply is very interesting. Dr. Omland wrote:

"Mike. Thanks for being in touch. I am carbon copying my former PhD student Frode Jacobsen. Frode was able to show that the reason Black-backed and Baltimore are so closely related based on mitochondrial DNA was because of hybridization in the past. Furthermore nuclear genes also show gene flow between Baltimore and Black-Backed. I am also copying a couple other friends who I know will be interested."

Orioles get around. Over hundreds of thousands of years non-migratory lineages have made it out to nearly every island in the Caribbean and furthermore that lineage colonized South America from the Caribbean. Of course Baltimore orioles show up in Europe not very infrequently. This is supposed to be a short distant migrant and indeed it's surprising it came this way; but this kind of thing happens from time to time and it's very interesting. I do not know of any Black backed Orioles in zoos anywhere. There might be one or two but I doubt it. Not that many orioles are kept as caged birds in Mexico. And other species would be much more prized for their song - Black-backs barely sing.

If people think the Pennsylvania winter is hard on an oriole that lived in the wild in Mexico just imagine how hard it would be on an oriole that lived in captivity previously. Furthermore some of the Black-backs do not migrate and spend the winter at high-altitude around Mexico City where the temperature goes below freezing frequently. So this is not really a tropical oriole species. I don't think parsimony favors this being an ex captive unless there's some other evidence that people can produce.

Of course I'm interested to hear what other people have to say. Hopefully people are just enjoying watching it. I don't think there's any need to band it or get any tissues from it. I hope the landowners continue to let people watch it. Thanks a lot for sending us the email.

Sincerely, Kevin Omland"

According to The paper Dr. Omland co-authored "Coalescent Analyses of Multiple Loci Support a New Route to Speciation in Birds" 1 The Black-backed oriole and Baltimore split as species when the ancestral population of black-backs changed their migration habits and became short-range migrants and this occurred very recently (evolutionary speaking) in the Pleistocene. So long-range migration was the ancestral condition, Maybe this bird is a throwback!

Another comment I received from Jason Weckstein at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philly.

"Thanks for including me on the email loop. Mike I am curator of Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University and am also an avid birder. I hope it sticks around. I agree with everything that Kevin has said so far. There are other interesting long distance extralimital records of Mexican montane or high elevation birds. For example back in 2012 there was a singing Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush on territory in South Dakota... way outside its normal range. Some of these Mexican high elevation birds are short distance migrants and we don't know a lot about their movements... and short distance migrants can sometimes go too far! My gut feeling is that this is a legit record... but the reality is in some of these cases we will never know with 100% certainty. Still hope to get out there to see it."

References:

1) Coalescent Analyses of Multiple Loci Support a New Route to Speciation in Birds

Author(s): Beatrice Kondo, Jeffrey L. Peters, Bryan B. Rosensteel and Kevin E. Omland

Source: Evolution, Vol. 62, No. 5 (May, 2008), pp. 1182-1191

Published by: Society for the Study of Evolution

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30134274>

Accessed: 04-02-2017 23:57 UTC

2) Recent Speciation between the Baltimore Oriole and the Black-Backed Oriole

Author(s): Beatrice Kondo, Jason M. Baker and Kevin E. Omland

Source: The Condor, Vol. 106, No. 3 (Aug., 2004), pp. 674-680

Published by: American Ornithological Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4151062>

Accessed: 04-02-2017 23:05 UTC

3) Bill Uhrich: Mexican visitor continues to attract the attention of birders Reading Eagle Sunday Feb. 12, 2017 <http://www.readingeagle.com/life/article/bill-urich-mexican-visitor-continues-to-attract-the-attention-of-birders>

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes. Identification fits book description and pictures perfectly and no other oriole species fits.

During

none

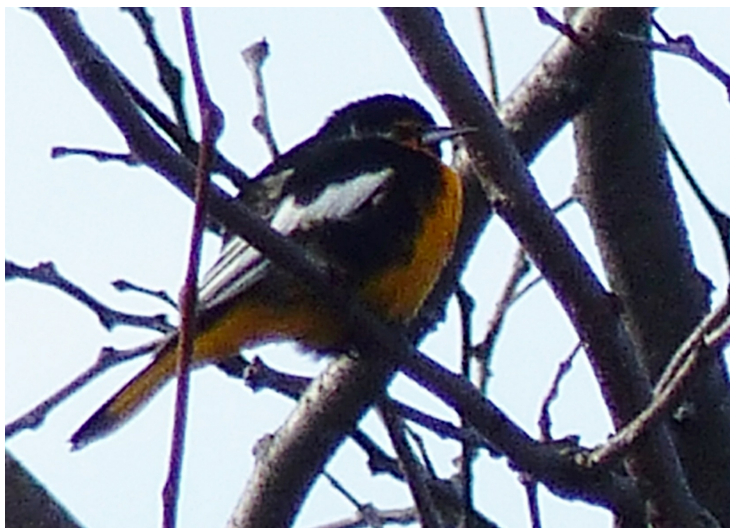
After

Facebook Advanced Bird ID discussion Group, Peterson Field guide to Mexican birds, A guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America by Howell and Webb.

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



[Mike Slater Brightened and cropped P1610734.JPG](#)



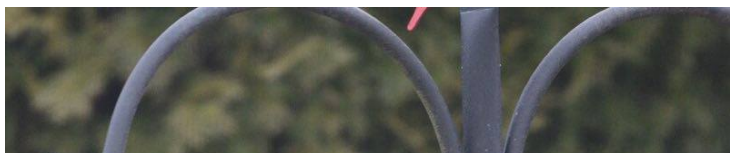
[Mike Slater P1610632.JPG](#)



[P1610937.JPG](#)

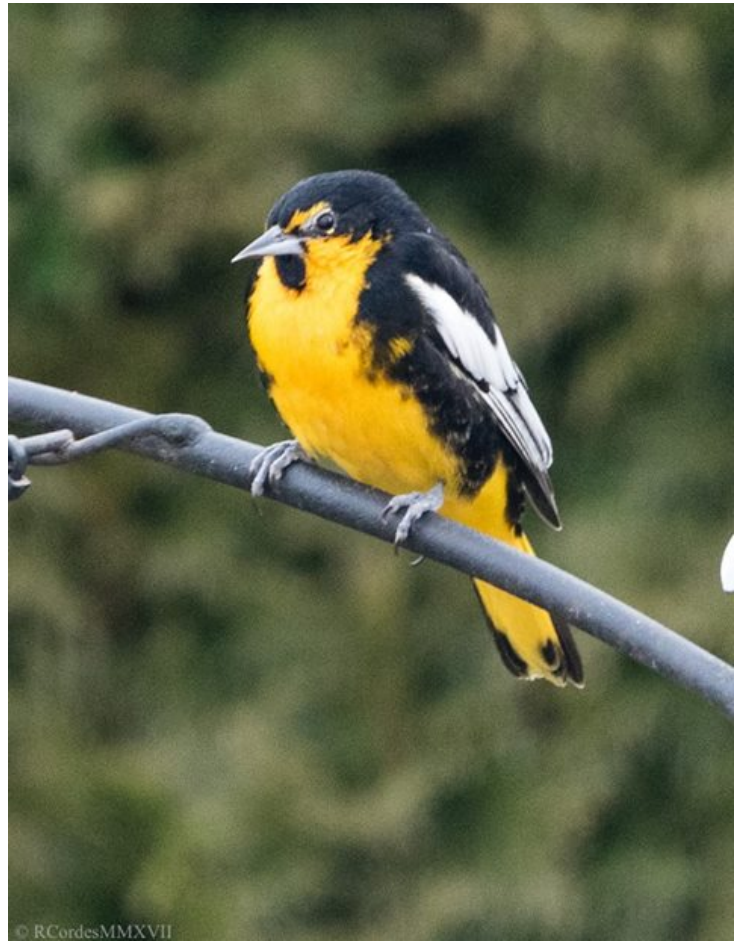


[Rob Cordes 1 FB download.jpg](#)





[Rob Cordes 2 FB download.jpg](#)



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[Rob Cordes 3 FB download.jpg](#)



[mike slater P1610661.JPG](#)



[mike slater P1610703 brightened.JPG](#)

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PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-11-29 20:43:26
Observer's Name	Josh Cantor
E-mail	joshcantor98@gmail.com
Observer's Address	United States
Names of additional observers	Walker Catlett, Baxter Beamer, Max Nootbaar, Tucker Beamer
Species (Common Name)	Black-backed Oriole
Species (Scientific Name)	Icterus abeilli
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult male
Observation Date and Time	03-12-2017 7:50 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S35124448
County	Berks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Sinking Spring
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	21 Indiana Ave, Sinking Spring
Optical equipment used	Leica Trinovid HD 8x42 binocular
Description	First seen at 7:55 AM. Bird was perched on bare tree in between two spruces. Came back several times from 7:55-8:15, then re-appeared at 9:00. Large white wing panel, black nape and cheeks, yellow-orange underbelly, and black flanks.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	Sunning on bare tree, then eating jelly and grapes at feeder
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	Origins of bird are unknown
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	Yes

After

https://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/Species-Account/nb/p_p_spp/overview?p_p_spp=677356

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph
Drawing

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



[Black-backed Oriole \(Icterus albicollis\).JPG](#)

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