

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2016-05-10 13:58:18
Observer's Name	Stephen Dowlan
E-mail	owlhooter@aol.com
Phone	814-319-2332
Observer's Address	Street Address: 337 Hickory Street Street Address Line 2: Apt. B City: Warren State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 16365 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	None
Species (Common Name)	Black-headed Grosbeak
Species (Scientific Name)	Pheucticus melanocephalus
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	adult male
Observation Date and Time	05-10-2016 9:20 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29540341
County	Warren
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Deerfield Township, Tidioute mailing address
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	5843 Althom Road
GPS coordinates of sighting	N41.759585, E-79.294913
Habitat	Edge between a mowed and landscaped yard and a a wooded stream
Distance to bird	80 ft.
Viewing conditions	Overcast with very light rain
Optical equipment used	Nikon Monarch 10X42 binoculars

Description	I first viewed the bird with its back turned toward me with its head turned slightly toward me. The bird's large bright white wing patches first caught my eye while it flew across the residential yard. Hoping for something like a Red-headed Woodpecker, I backed the vehicle for a second look. From about 80 feet away, I saw an obvious male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at the edge of the yard, feeding in low vegetation at the base of a large tree. While I was watching this bird, a second bird popped up from the vegetation within a few feet of the first one. The second bird was consistently dark orange below, similar the color of an American robin's under parts. The first thing that clued me in to the second bird's identification was the demarcation of color on the back of the head - The top of the head and the face was deep black, but the black did not cover the nape, which was also dark orange. When the bird turned its head, I could clearly see the heavy bill, which was lighter in color than the head and face. The wings were also very black, with a large pure white epaulet on the median coverts and a narrower bright white bar on the greater coverts. The rump was orange, and the tail was pure black, with no discernible edging of any other color. I observed the bird for about 30 seconds.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	The bird first flew for about 100 feet in clear view. Flight was direct, with no "roller-coaster" effect. It was relocated while foraging in low shrub vegetation at the base of a large tree. It flew up into the lower limbs of the tree before disappearing. Because it was private land, I was unable to pursue the bird further.
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	<p>The general pattern of color was similar to the nearby Rose-breasted Grosbeak, but the color of the underside, nape of the neck and rump were obviously different. The color pattern of the wing was essentially the same as with a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The rusty orange color, especially the clear demarcation between the top of the head and the nape eliminated a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak.</p> <p>The color of the underpants was similar to a male Hooded Oriole, but the bill shape was clearly not blackbird-like, and the bold white markings were inconsistent with that species. The shade of orange was much more subdued than with Baltimore Oriole, and the shape of the bill was also not consistent with the bird in view.</p> <p>although the color was consistent with Eastern Towhee, the entire belly was orange, unlike the markings of a towhee. The contrasting bill color and orange nape eliminated towhee from consideration.</p>
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	I am positive. Because i lived in Oregon for 28 years, the identification was immediately obvious to me. This species was a feeder bird for me for much of that time. I am an experienced bird bander, and I have banded Black-headed Gosbeak in Oregon and Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks in Pennsylvania. I also served as an alternate on the Oregon Bird Records Committee while I lived in theat state.
During	None
After	National Geographic Birds of North America (though not really necessary)
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