

Black-headed Grosbeak
13 May 1985
Coralville Res., Johnson Co., IA
*T. Kent
IBL 55:69; 56:44

Record Number: 85-07
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H, Kent

NOTE

Midwest Black-headed Grosbeak Records by Date, T. H. Kent, 26
Sep 1985.

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:69
Records Committee: IBL 56:44

VOTE: 4-III, 1-IV, 1-V, 1-abstain

V, Can't rule out a first year Rose-br. or hybrid from what
was observed.

IV, While this is probably a correct ID, I too am bothered by
a Black-headed Grosbeak male that does not have a black head.
This may be due to lighting tricks or possibly the bird was a
hybrid or simply had aberrant coloration.

III, Most marks indicate a pure Black-headed Grosbeak.
Rose-breasted, for example, do have 1st nuptial plumage male
which arrive in plumage similar with females. Bill color in
observed bird is of B.-h. Brownish color of rump and breast, lack
of heavy streaking on breast, gray contrasting flanks. Song and
call were noted as being different than R-b., shorter and more
musical like the B.-h Grosbeak.

III, At last a male Black-headed Grosbeak! Description
indicates minimal hybrid characters.

REVOTE (at meeting, 5 Oct 1985, with spring vagrancy data
provided by Kent): 5-III, 1-IV, 1-abstain.

Midwest Black-headed Grosbeak Records By Date
9/26/85 T. H. Kent

85-07

- 01/01/75 OH Akron 1 Thompson 1983 p226
to 04/05 at feeder, photographed
- 01/17/65 IL Rockford 1 male Bohlen 1978 p 120
photo at feeder
- 01/27/78 ONT London 1 AB 33:278
through Feb, 3rd ONT record
- 01/29/76 IL Salem, Marion Co. 1 imm ma Bohlen 1978 p120, AB30:727
to 03/24, photographed
- 01/??/76 OH Cincinnati 1 Thompson 1983 p226
to 03, AB 30:727
- 02/ /72 IL Carbondale 1 male Bohlen 1978 p120, AB26:613
photo, mid-Feb to 03/23, 2nd IL record
- 03/03/65 OH Lucas Co. 1 Thompson 1983 p226
also 03/05 at feeder
- 03/03/75 WI Iowa Co. 1 male AB 29:696, 857
to mid-Apr, at feeder
- 03/25/63 MI Ann Arbor 1 male Payne 1983 p 53
specimen
- 04/15/78 KY Louisville 1 AB 32:1016
also 04/16
- 04/19/72 MN St Paul 1 imm ma Green and Janssen 1975
to 04/26 at feeder, Loon 44:121-122, AB 26:765
- 04/24/60 OH Cleveland 1 Thompson 1983 p226
- 05/05/82 IL Champaign 1 IAB 202:51
- 05/06/78 ONT Rosslyn 1 AB 32:1001
photographed, 2nd photo record
- 05/11/72 MN Washington Co. 1 female Loon 44:79, 45:64-65
hybrid, netted, well-described AB 26:765 St Paul
- 05/11/74 MN Washington Co. 1 female Loon 46:117
to 06/01 at feeder
- 05/11/83 MN ~~Cane~~ Co 1 male Loon 55:93
Curran
- 05/13/74 MN Washington Co. 1 male Loon 46:117
- 05/13/74 MN Albert Lea 1 male Loon 46:116-117
- 05/14/75 OH Columbus 1 Thompson 1983 p226
- 05/14/78 WI Ozaukee Co. 1 AB 32:1011
photographed at feeder
- 05/19/70 WI Manitowoc Co. 1 AFN 24:608
'one of very few records'
- 05/19/74 OH Lucas Co. 1 Thompson 1983 p226
- 05/21/74 IL Wilmette 1 male Bohlen 1978 p 120
AB 28:809
- 05/23/82 MI Tawas, Iosco Co. 1 Payne 1983 p53, AB 36:856
JPW 60:129
- 05/24/79 WI Pierce Co. 1 male AB 33:775
- 05/24/84 MN St Paul 1 male Loon 56:196

- 05/27/70 MN Washington Co. 1 male Loon 46:117
no detail available
- 05/29/83 WI Gordon 1 male PP 46:34,48
- 05/30/82 MI Baraga Co. 2 Payne 1983 p53, AB 36:856
JPW 60:129
- 05/??/74 MN Emmons, Freeborn Co. 1 male Loon 46:116-117
mid-May
- 05/??/74 MN Albert Lea 1 male Loon 46:116-117
early May
- 05/??/74 MN London, Freeborn Co. 2 males Loon 46:116-117
early May
- 06/06/40 MN Duluth 1 male Green and Janssen 1975
- 06/10/75 MN Blue Mounds SP,RockC 1 male Loon 47:139, AB 29:978
brief look by Kim Eckert
- 06/30/81 WI Madison 1 AB 35:943
1st summer record
- 07/ /67 MN Dakota Co. 1 male Green and Janssen 1975
mid-Jul to 08/09, fed juv at feeder on 08/06 Loon39:130
- 08/28/49 ONT Kenora,Lake of Woods pair AFN 4:14
first ONT record
- 09/20/70 IA Waterloo 1 Iowa Birds p281, IBL40:74
class IV
- 09/29/82 MN Manitowoc 1 imm ma AB 37:184
- 10/10/82 MN Lake Co. 1 Loon 55:79
- 10/10/82 MN Encampment, Lake Co. 1 imm ma AB 37:184
also 10/11, ? same as Manitowoc bird
- 10/19/81 MN Grand Marais 1 imm ma AB 36:181, Loon 54:61-62
- 10/29/75 MO Lake Spring 1 AB 30:81
caught, photographed, 1st permanent evidence for MO
- 10/30/68 IA Manti Woods 1 Iowa Birds p281
IBL 39:43
- 11/10/71 WI Ontagamie Co. 1 AB 26:69
at feeder, one of few records
- 11/14/69 WI Madison 1 AFN 24:53,508
at feeder for winter, 2nd WI record, photographed
- 11/20/63 MI Flint 1 female Payne 1983 p53, AFN18:358
to 01/18/64, first MI record
- 11/24/73 IL Springfield 1 imm ma Bohlen 1978 p120,AB 28:62
first central IL
- 12/01/78 IA Cedar Rapids 1 Iowa Birds p281,IBL 49:64
photo
- 12/04/73 ONT Ancasta 1 AB 28:635
to 12/24, 1st Ontario record
- 12/13/81 IA Le Claire 1 imm ma Iowa Birds p281,AB 36:301
IBL 52:39 (photo)
- 12/21/81 MI Mt Pleasant 1 Payne 1983 p53, AB 36:298
to 01/04/82, JPW 60:93
- 12/23/68 IN Lake Co. 1 Keller 1979 p184
to 03/20/69 at feeder

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Black-headed Grosbeak (1)

13 May 1985, Coralville Res., Johnson Co., IA

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

Other observers: none

Time: 8:20-8:30 AM

Habitat: Bird was in old willows at edge of reservoir.

Description: "A grosbeak first heard in willow trees near parking lot at Sand Point. Did not sound like (typical) Rose-breasted Grosbeak, so I looked for the bird. Same basic notes as Rose-breasted, but louder and more musical (later I noted that the Rose-breasted Grosbeaks had a longer song--this bird sang 3 or 4 phrases and then paused before singing again). Bird was overall brown, the size of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak with large grosbeak bill. The head, neck and breast and lower back to tail were a medium chocolate brown. The bird never turned right for me to be sure whether there was any black on the head or not. There seemed to be no eyeline. The bill was perhaps lighter at base and of medium color. There was a fairly sharp demarcation between the brown color of the breast and the medium neutral gray of the belly and under rump. The wings were darker, almost black, with two thin white wing bars. The tail was black with no markings. I did not see the under wing color or axillaries, but I didn't see and red when it flew. The bird sang continuously and flew off into the thick willows as I chased it and got a few more looks at it. Finally it flew across a large field and disappeared."

Behavior: In trees singing.

Conditions (distance, light, optical equipment): As close as 30 feet, mostly back to side lighting, 10x binoculars.

Similar species: The brown color most closely matched that shown by Peterson (1980) for the male Black-headed Grosbeak. The features I saw best were the brown rump, the contrast between the brown breast and flanks and gray belly, the thin white wing bars, and the darker color of wings and tail. The fact that the bird was singing loudly and continuously indicates that it was a male. The lack of breast streaking, dark color, and failure to see an eye stripe also argue against the bird being a female. The rich brown coloration only fits Black-headed Grosbeak. No features that fit Rose-breasted Grosbeak, such as red on the breast or underwings, white flanks or rump, or light-colored bill, were seen. Failure to see a demarcated black head and white in the wing and tail in flight is disturbing, but the side to back lighting and brief duration of each look at the bird (when I concentrated on looking at the features cited above) may account for this. The wing bars were not as wide as usually depicted for males. Perhaps the bird was in first nuptial plumage.

Previous experience: Have seen Black-headed Grosbeaks in Colorado and reviewed several articles discussing hybridization of Black-headed and Rose-breasted grosbeaks.

Dictated 10 minutes after sighting. Typed 6 hours later. Several field guides and Bent used after notes made.