

Black-throated Sparrow

Record Number: 93-19

17 Mar 1993

Classification: A-P

Waterloo, Black Hawk Co., IA

*Fuller, *****

to 9 Apr; P-0385, IBL 63:79, 64:68

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller, 17 Mar, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

Peter C. Petersen, 17 Mar, 235 McClellan Blvd, Davenport 52803

Mark Proescholdt, 17 Mar, Box 65, Liscomb, 50148

Thomas H. Kent, 17 Mar, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

Jim Scheib, 17 Mar, 10 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

Randy Pinkston, 20 Mar, 526 Reno St., Iowa City 52245

Ray Cummins, 20 Mar, 609 S. Main St., Centerville

PHOTOGRAPHS

Reid I. Allen, 20 Mar, P-0385

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 63:79

Records Committee: IBL 64:68

American Birds 47:420, 1993, P-0385

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Not only was this a great record but it was a wonderfully cooperative bird! Anyone who missed this one wasn't trying! As usual Pinkston's drawings are great.

Sent to: Maurice and Ruby Hanson, 1262 Ackermant St., Waterloo, IA 50703 [12/10/93]

in Gibson, IN, Apr. 4 (GB). A N. Rough-winged Swallow appeared at L. Rockwell, OH, Mar. 31 (LR), which is quite early for n. Ohio.

JAYS TO SHRIKES

An impressive Blue Jay migration, estimated at 1200 birds per hour, was witnessed at Perkin's Beach, OH, Apr. 29 (W & NK). Few migrant Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported in the Region; the highest count was two in J.P., May 2 (SS). Surprisingly, for the first time in a decade, Red-breasteds nested in Indiana; on May 8 a pair was observed carrying food into a cavity in *St. Joseph* (*fide* VR). A Rock Wren visited the D. Youngblut residence, Warren, IA, Apr. 25 (†AJ, RA, ph.), providing one of few spring records for the Region. Extralimital Bewick's Wrens appeared in Urbana, IL, Apr. 2-6 (RCh), in Elkhart, IN, May 8 (†ABe) and at Headlands Beach S.P., OH, May 15 (†EBa). Winter Wren numbers were very encouraging; high counts included 18 in Urbana, IL, Apr. 4 (RCh) and 15 at Fox Island Park, IN, Apr. 18 (Haw *et al.*). Two Sedge Wrens in J.P., Apr. 24 (JMc, SS), were early migrants and singletons at Headlands Beach S.P., OH, May 9 (RHk *et al.*), and at Magee Marsh, OH, May 7 (KA), were near the e. edge of the nesting range. Both kinglets were reported in good numbers; Ruby-crowned's lingered at S.C.R. through May 15 (PMc) and at Evanston, IL, until June 7 (*fide* EW). The two Townsend's Solitaires that wintered near Rock Fall, IA, remained until Apr. 3 (CN). A very late Veery was discovered in Chicago, June 13 (RHu). Good numbers of Hermit Thrushes appeared along the Great Lakes; the peak count was 117+ at J.P., Apr. 24 (SS, EW). The Region's only Varied Thrush was a male that appeared at Carol Gunderson's feeder in Union, IA, Mar. 21 (MP). American Pipits were scarce, with no more than one reported in any state except Illinois.

SHRIKES TO TANAGERS

The easternmost Loggerhead Shrike report came from Chillicothe, OH, where one was observed May 28 (TB). White-eyed Vireos are expanding northward in Ohio (*fide* LR). Unexpected Bell's Vireos appeared in Lake, IN, May 11 (JBo) and at Buck Cr. S.P., OH, May 22-30 (DO, LG). Impressive vireo counts included 20 Warbling at L. Cal., May 8 (WM, JL) and 50 Red-eyes in Piatt, IL (RCh), and Chicago (SM), both May 15.

Birders throughout much of the Region heralded the warbler migration as the best in years. The most glowing reports came from the Chicago area, n. Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri, suggesting that the Mississippi Valley may have served as a primary migration route. Assessments ranged from "a good warbler year" to "the best ever." Indeed, some reports kindled "the good ol' days" nostalgia. For example, in 5 hours at Chicago's Wooded I. (J.P.), May 9, S. Suter found 108 species, including 32 different warblers, within this 20-acre tract. An interesting characteristic of the



Summer Tanagers have been expanding northward in the Midwest, and this male got a head start on the migration season as well, arriving in Will County, Illinois, on the early date of April 14, 1993. Photograph/ Joe B. Milosevich.

warbler flight was the early arrival of many species that normally appear in mid or late May. Additionally, the normally early Yellow-rumped Warbler flight was delayed, resulting in heavy movement that extended into mid-May. St. Louis birders detected the retarded flight during the afternoon of Apr. 27, when Yellow-rumped's were observed passing at the rate of 85 per hour (*fide* DA). The following high daily counts provide a sense of the flight magnitude: 11 Golden-winged's at the Ryerson Conservation Area, IL, May 8 (DJ); 200 Tennessee's in Chicago May 15 (SM); 44 Nashville's in Macon, IL, May 8 (RPa); 60 Magnolia's in Chicago May 23 (RHu); 40 Cape Mays at J.P., May 7 (SS); nine ♂ Black-throated Blues at the Skokie Lagoons, IL, May 9 (WS); 45 Wilson's in Chicago May 23 (RHu), and 25 Canadas in Chicago May 23 (RHu). The Region's only really rare parulid was a ♀ Townsend's Warbler discovered at the Chicago Botanic Garden May 6 (ph., LB, †JL, m.ob.), which provided the 3rd Illinois record.

Summer Tanagers continued their northward expansion, with reports of nine out-of-range birds in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. During a 2-day period, ♂ W. Tanagers appeared in the w. states at Lime Cr. conservation area, IA, May 10 (†CN), Honey Cr. W.M.A., MO, May 10 (CFh), and L. Manawa, IA, May 11 (B & LP).

GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES

An ad. ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak appeared in Andrews, MO, Apr. 20-26 (†D & SS), where this species is rare. Blue Grosbeaks continued their northward expansion, with reports of a male in Will, IL, May 8 (JM) and seven at Willow Slough W.M.A., IN, May 31 (DP, m.ob.). Dickcissels made a good showing in Ohio, where 3 reports came from s. portions of the state; one individual pushed northward to Parma Heights May 25, where this species is rare (RHI, TLp). The Green-tailed Towhee that spent late winter in Amherst Township, OH, lingered through April (*fide* LR). At least 11 Clay-colored Sparrows were reported in Illinois, most in the Chicago area. One Clay-colored wandered E to Cleveland, where it was seen Apr. 29

(RHI). Three Lark Sparrows at Sauerheber N.W.R., KY, Apr. 24 (MM, BM, MS) were noteworthy for that state. The Region's only Lark Bunting appeared at Bob Brown W.M.A., MO, May 25 (DE). On the heels of Missouri's first state record last winter, Iowa's first Black-throated Sparrow appeared at a Waterloo feeder Mar. 16 and remained until Apr. 2 (†JF, †PP, †MP, †TK, RA, †m.ob. ph.). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Spring Valley W.M.A., OH, May 9 (DG *fide* NK), provided an outstanding local record. The two Golden-crowned Sparrows that wintered near Columbia, MO, remained until April; the last bird was seen Apr. 21 (PMc). A ♀ or winter ♂ Chestnut-collared Longspur was studied at L. Cal., Apr. 17-18 (DM, †JOB, m.ob.). The bird, which constitutes one of very few well-documented Illinois records, gave the diagnostic "kittle" call. Smith's Longspurs were scarce; the only reports consisted of 3 small flocks in Illinois and singletons in Indiana and Iowa.

Although some observers suggested that Bobolink numbers were down, fine counts of 150 at Chicago, May 15 (SM) and 100+ at Headlands Beach S.P., OH, May 9 (LR, RHk) were reported. Following a poor 1992



Perhaps a straggler from last fall's push of wanderers, this Black-throated Sparrow provided a first record for Iowa at Waterloo in late March 1993. Photograph/ Reid I. Allen.

breeding season, Yellow-headed Blackbird numbers at L. Cal., the Region's westernmost nesting area, were significantly down this spring. This population may be in trouble (*fide* JL). Brewer's Blackbird numbers were up in Illinois, where a peak count of 35 was recorded in Havana Apr. 2 (KR). The Great-tailed Grackle continues to flourish in Iowa; a pair was found May 19 nesting in Cherokee, n.w. IA (DBi *et al.*).

The Region's only Red Crossbills consisted of three at Clinton L., IL, Mar. 3 (RCh), 20 at Sand Ridge S.F. Mar. 20 (KR), and three in Vincennes, IN, May 22 (GB). Remarkably, the handful of Regional Pine Siskin reports included a breeding record for Indiana, where a pair was noted feeding young at Pokagon S.P., May 5 (ASL). White-winged Crossbills, Com. Redpolls, and Evening Grosbeaks were not reported in the Region.

Corrigendum: The report of 34 Red-necked Grebes at Buck Cr. S.P., OH, Nov. 8, 1992 (AB47:99) should be deleted.



Black-throated Sparrow P-0385
Waterloo, Black Hawk Co., IA
20 Mar 1993 Reid I. Allen

93-19

11-81 MINN 564 111-028

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Black-throated Sparrow

LOCATION: Feeder of Maurice and Ruby Hanson, 1262 Ackermant, Waterloo (Black Hawk County).

DATE: 17 March, 1993 (7:44-47 AM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHER OBSERVERS: First observers were the Hansons and Francis Moore of Waterloo. At the time I was there, Tom Stone was present. Later there were MOBs.

BACKGROUND: The bird was reported to the Iowa Birdline the evening of 16 March as having been present at this location since 14 March. Early the next morning, only about a minute after arriving and parking near the feeder, the bird flew in on the ground below the feeder. It stayed about three minutes and flew away.

DESCRIPTION: The general size was more dainty than the House Sparrows nearby. They were the only other birds available for size comparison. The bird was also relatively longer tailed than House Sparrow. The most striking feature was the black bib which was somewhat diamond shaped, covering the throat and coming to a point on the upper breast. This black contrasted with the white breast and belly. There were two very prominent white stripes on the side of the head. one above the eye, and the other angling down from the corner of the bill. The crown was a sooty gray-brown color, as was the back. The eye was dark. The short, pointed bill was gray, with the lower mandible appearing lighter than the upper. The folded wing and tail were darker than the back, and there were no noticeable wing bars. The belly was white, but appeared to be more gray toward the sides. The legs were dark. I did not see the undertail or vent areas. Behaviorwise, the bird was more animated than the House Sparrows. No vocalization was heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The black bib in combination with the wide white face stripes is distinctive. No other sparrow-like bird has these features. The other desert southwest birds which are similar are Sage and Five-striped Sparrows, both of which have white throats and a dark stickpin on the breast.

OPTICS & VIEWING CONDITIONS: I was only 20-25 feet from the bird, and looked out my windshield with Swift Audubon

binoculars (8.5 X 44). It was a sunny, early morning, and I was looking toward the northwest.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen (and photographed) this species numerous times in Arizona and California.

REFERENCES and FIELD NOTES: I wrote field notes as I was observing the bird, and finished them after it flew away. This report was typed the next day, 18 March. I had looked at the National Geographic guide the previous evening, but did not look at it again until after the field notes were complete.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

93-19

What species? English Sparrow How many? 1

Location? W. 2. 00 - A.

Type of Habitat? urban

When? date(s): March 17 1973 time: 8:35 to 8:40 AM

Who? your name and address: Patricia C. Greenman 235 W. Chilton Blvd Des Moines IA 50312

Others with you: Brown Pelicans Tim Kautz

Others before or after you: Wings - Jim Fuller, Frances Moore

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Smallish sparrow, a bit smaller than nearby junco, cap grey, brown white band above & below eye, black to rich grey through back & wings, brown white below except throat black, ending in a point on chest, brown bars to brown white outer feathers on each side, no back streaks, bill grey.

Similar species; how eliminated: House sparrow, back streaked, black rich brown through, black throat, even line, not point on chest, bill black, several nearby for comparison.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Sun behind obs. - 30' away under feeder - 10x40 Zeiss Binocs

Previous experience with species and similar ones: We have seen many times in its usual range.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Checked Geo guide prior to sighting

How long before field notes made? During obs this form completed? 6 hrs.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

What species? Black-throated Sparrow How many? 1Location? Waterloo - Black Hawk CountyType of habitat? Residential Neighborhood along RR tracks - Nice feedersWhen? date(s): March 17, 1993 time: 11:15 to 11:18 app.
later to for 1-2 minutesWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148
Beth Proescholdt, Armstrongs, Curt Nelson, Marty Paulay, Carolyn Fischer,
others with you: Pat Hanson, Rita Soranson, Jan Walters, Beth McBride, Tim Fallonothers before or after you: Tom Kent, Jim Fuller, Pete Peterson, Hank Jalotel, Tim Schantz
and others

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

This sparrow-like bird came to the feed on the ground below a feeder. It was smaller and slimmer than a House Sparrow. It was a brownish-gray color on its back and sides like the Oregon-type Junco that was with it once. It had a vivid black throat and bib with whitish lines surrounding the black bib. Its breast was an off-white color. It was an elegant sparrow!

Similar species and how eliminated: A Black-Chinned Sparrow is mostly gray with a small black chin area and a grayish breast. A Harris' sparrow is larger and does not have the uniform blackish bib with a point at the bottom of it.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain: :

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Sunny; sun at side and behind us - parked in driveway at the alley;
30'-35' away - estimated; 8x30 Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen in Arizona

References and persons consulted before writing description: NoneHow long before field notes made? 4:00 p.m. this form completed? March 24, 1993
that day

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Black-throated Sparrow; **Number:** 1

Location: Waterloo, Iowa

Date: 17 March 1993; **Time:** 12:55-1:00; 1:55-2:00 p.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: Dick Tetrault, Ken Lowder, Maurice Hanson, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford with; Francis Moore, Jim Fuller before.

Habitat and circumstances: residential near edge of town

Description of bird: About the same size but slimmer than House Sparrows. The bird was overall gray -- light gray underparts and tan gray upper parts. The top of the head was a soft gray-tan, the wings a bit more on the tan side, and the tail darker. There was a prominent white superciliary line, wider posteriorly, and a white mustache line. The area between the lines was darker than the upperparts but not black. The eye was dark with a thin white eye cup below. The lores, bill, and throat were black. The black extended down the throat to the breast in a well-defined V. There were no wing bars. The undertail area was lighter than the belly. The bird feed on the ground under a large feeder where there was a lot of spilled food.

Voice: not heard

Similar species: The field marks of this species are not similar to any other sparrow.

Any one have reservations?: no

Light: side lighting, sunny; **Distance:** about 30 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular; 20x scope.

Previous experience: I have seen many in the Southwest.

References before/after viewing: Looked at National Geographic Guide after making notes.

Time of notes: Just after first viewing; **Final typing:** 19 hours.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Black-throated Sparrow *How Many?* one

Location: 1262 Ackermant Street, Waterloo

Type of habitat? Back yard

When? Date(s): 3/17/93 *time:* approx. 5:15 pm

Who? your name and address:

James Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240-9148

Others with you: none

Others before or after you F. Moore, James Fuller before

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

A male black-throated sparrow feeding on the ground among house sparrows. Sparrow-sized bird with dark eye area on face, flanked above and below by brilliantly white stripes. The eye stripe was bordered by a thin black outline. The moustache stripe became the upper edge of the large black triangle on the throat which came to a sharp point at the bottom and was sharply defined on the edges. Remainder of underparts were light with no spotting or streaking. At least the lower mandible had a light cast to it.

Similar species and how eliminated:

I don't know of any species similar to this strikingly beautiful sparrow.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?

All above named birders agreed on the identification.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Seen from 20 feet looking west into setting sun but viewed from a shaded spot with 7x35 Nikon binoculars for five minutes.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

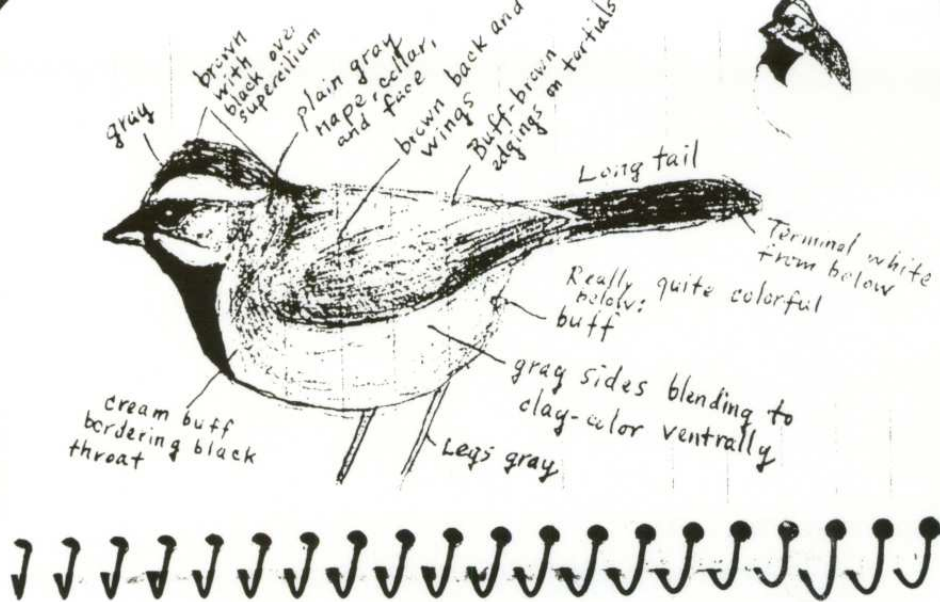
I have observed this species in both Texas and Arizona in the last two years.

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? No notes made at the time.

How long before this form completed? Two hours

MAIL TO; T.H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240



DOCUMENTATION OF RARE SPECIES

Black-throated Sparrow, Amphispiza bilineata

Date: Saturday, 20 March 1993

Time: Noon-13:45

Location: Waterloo (1262 Ackermant), Blackhawk County, Iowa

Description:

The bird returned to the ground under the feeders four or five times during which I made the accompanying drawings. It was solitary except when feeding with other species under the feeders. Away from the feeders it perched low in small trees or brush, or it foraged under a junked Corvair. A little larger than Black-capped Chickadee. Distinctly smaller than House Sparrows, even with feathers fluffed. About junco-sized. Plump sparrow with long tail. Tail length a little less than combined head and body length.

An adult. Immediately striking were the two large white facial stripes and black "bib". The superciliary stripe began anterior to the eye, widening over the eye itself, then narrowing posteriorly and curving somewhat upward. The other stripe, also quite wide, was along the "malar" line, beginning just behind the mandible and ending abruptly on the lower face. Between these stripes the anterior face and eye were black. A faint ring of white was evident around the eye, most noticeable inferiorly. The black "bib" comprised the chin and throat area between the white "malar" stripes and then extended ventrally to a point on the chest (see drawing). The "bib" was bordered on each side of the chest by a narrow strip of bright cream-buff.

Cheek and sides of neck gray. Forehead and anterior crown dark gray with some black present along the superior border of the white superciliary stripe above the eye. Posterior crown and nape brown in color, continuous with the brown back.

Maxilla black; mandible light gray

Underparts really quite colorful, though pale compared to dorsum: Gray sides blending to a clay color ventrally and buffy posteriorly. Palest at midline belly.

Back, scapulars and wing coverts plain brown and continuous with the same brown on the nape. Outer webs of primaries and secondaries also plain brown; inner webs a darker drab brown. Tertials brown with buff edgings.

(over)

Description, continued...

Long thin tail widened slightly toward its tip. Tail color dark drab brown above and below with broad white tips of rectrices evident only from below.

Legs gray.

No vocalizations were appreciated.

Conditions: Overcast, calm, temp. 30s^oF. 70% snowcover. Observed with Zeiss 10x40 binocular and Bausch & Lomb 30x telescope from 8-10 meters.

Similar Species: Adult is unmistakable.

Previous Experience: I have observed many Black-throated Sparrows over the last 17 years from central Texas across to southern California. Among the popular field guides, I believe this individual is most accurately represented in Richard Pough's Eastern Land Bird Guide (Plate 44).

--Randy Pinkston
526 Reno Street
Iowa City, IA 52245-3039
Ph. (319)351-0592

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

93-19

1. Species Black-THROATED SPARROW 2. Number 1

3. Location Waterloo, IA

4. Date: 3-20-93 5. Time Bird Seen: 15 min to

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): Nearly as big as house sparrows present. 1) Long tail
2) White eye line 3) White whisker 4) white half moon below eye. 5) grayish sides 6) grayish Nape & crown. 7) Brown-gray back 8) No wing bars 9) black legs. 10) Black tear-dropped bib 11) white belly.

7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A

8. Description of behavior:

9. Habitat - general: Feeding Station
specific: ground feeder

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7, & 8.
Explain: Black-tear-dropped bird is distinct

11. Distance (how measured)? 25 yds 12. Optical equipment: Kowa Spotting Scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
good

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

15. Other observers: None

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: None checked during sighting

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?
Field notes on sight - 2 months before transferred to documentation

Signature: Ray Cummins Address: 609 S. Main Street

Date: 5-30-93 Conterville City, State: IA