Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union Printed: 07/17/93

Black-headed Grosbeak 1 21 May 1990 Nevada, Story Co., IA Bill Abbott also 22 May; photo; IBL 60:71, 62:22 Record Number: 90-17 Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Bill D. Abbott

PHOTOGRAPH

Bill Abbott, P-0367

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:71 Records Committee: IBL 62:22

VOTE: 1 A-P, 2 A-D, 4 NA

A-D: This bird has a very wide range of vagrancy even reaching the eastern sea coast north to Maine. It seems as this bird moves in cycles. In 1982 a female was reported in NWest Iowa by Doug Harr. We had a good look at one in Runnells Wildlife area. Several other reports came in. In 1990 this document as well as other reports came to me. A male at Tim Schantz parents south of Winterset in May. The bird Eloise & her mother seen. Eloise and I saw another bird in May about 5 miles away. I think there are more Black-headed Grosbeaks in Iowa than are ever reported. An excellent document was done on hybrids in Iowa Bird Life. If we are close enough to where these species interbreed we are certainly close enough to see either of these species.

NA: By date, this bird would no longer be an immature bird and would be some sort of adult female. For help, I turned to Bruce Peterjohn's article in Iowa Bird Life (IBL 53: 22-23). Peterjohn says the most important feature with adult females is the pattern of the underparts: "Breast color: distinctly orange-buff in Black-headed; a dirty buffy-white in Rose Breasted; traces of both in hybrids." The original photo shows a mostly white or gray breast with a small isolated patch of orange feathers in the center of the upper breast. This seems to clearly indicate a hybrid. A Black-headed would have a mostly orange breast. Peterjohn goes on to say that the Rose-breasted is heavy and uniformly streaked underneath while Black-headed is mostly unstreaked. The description mentions (and the photo confirms) that this bird's breast, belly, and flanks were heavily streaked. This seems to go strongly against Black-headed. In all fairness, the original photo did not duplicate well and was not in front of the other committee members when they were evaluating the written description.

NA: Just a few comments until I can study photographs at length. Observer states eye stripe was "vivid white". This is indicative of Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Lower breast and belly both streaked also favors Rose-breasted. (see Peterjohn, Iowa Bird Life 53:22-23). Orange streaks on crown suggest Black-headed Grosbeak. I am inclined at this point to believe this bird either a Rose-breasted Grosbeak or a hybrid.

A-P: I recall seeing, but could not find, an article a few

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Black-headed Grosbeak 21 May 1990 RC No. 90-17 (cont)

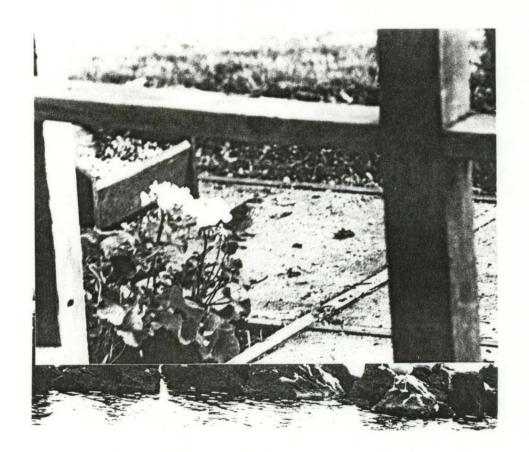
years back dealing with hybrids of this species (with Rose-breasted). Since I couldn't find it, and since this bird was obviously at least part Black-headed Grosbeak, I think I'll go with it. Nice description. I assume the original photo showed more detail than the photocopy - thus the A-P vote.

NA: From the written description I can not determine if the bird is an immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak or a female Black-headed Grosbeak. The description of the vivid white line above the eye seems to fit Rose-breasted better than Black-headed, and the most diagnostic field mark the lemon-yellow

wing linings were not noted.

NA: This could very easily be a hybrid Rose-breasted X Black-headed Grosbeak. Given the description as written I can not completely rule out female Rose-breasted, especially considering what appears to be fairly heavy streaking on the breast, sides and belly with a light, probably not buff, coloration. Photo does not conclusively show a Black-headed Grosbeak. Most of the time the differences between Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks are very small and hard to discern. I can not beyond reasonable doubt say that the bird described is a Black-headed Grosbeak.

A-D: With the arrival of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in Iowa around May 1, in general, a bird seen May 22 in Iowa shouldn't be a juvenile bird yet with the incubation of Black-headed Grosbeak at 12-13 days and the days until fledging at 11-12 days. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is about the same time span. I believe a female Black-headed Grosbeak is denoted from the description of black on cheeks or side of head, an orange-streaked crown, an orange upper breast, and streaking along the side and belly of the lower breast. I couldn't tell details from the photo and the xerox copy of the photo to aid in my determination.



BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

	BIRDS. TEXAS TEXAS
1.	Species Black Headed Grosbeak (female) 2. Number: 1
	Location 1031 H. Ave. Nevada, Iowa 50201
4.	Date: May 21 and 22 1990 5. Time Bird seen: 6:00 P.M. and 7:00 a.M.
	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):  A Grosbeak type bird was seen at my squirrels bird feeders eating Kernels of Corn the bird was approximately robin size if not slightly smaller. The upper and lower monible was very stout. The head was black on the Cheeks or side with a Unid white streak above the eyes. Crown or top of head was light with a Unid white streak above the eyes. Crown or top of head was light orange streaked. Thoat was white turning to orange with streaks on the upper breast a little like a Juvenile robins breast. The lower breast was light with dark steaks a little like and bally. A white wing bar appeared along the upper part of the wing. The toes and tarsus were gray.
7.	Description of voice, if heard: I did not hear the bird Sing
9.	Description of behavior: Fed on the ground and the feeder that seen in the picture. The bird feel on small pieces of Corn. Sort of picture. The bird feel on small pieces of Corn. Sort of couked its head to the side. The lower breast was light with brown or black streaks along the side.
10.	Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: The fact this bird was sighted on May 21 and 22 makes it very unlikely an immature Rose breasted grosbeak. The red patch shown on the shoulder of an immature grospeak was not observed. The breast on the bird observed was not as spotted or Steaked as shown on the female rose breasted graspeak.
11.	Distance (how measured)? Twenty feet  12. Optical equipment: 35 m  Whith a Vivitor 75-250 mm 1:38-4.5  Macro Focusing Zoom lens.  Note that the picture was
14.	Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): The picture was taken about 7:00 a.m. The sun would have been in the lower eastern sky. The bird was facing east.  Previous experience with this, species and similarly appearing species: I have been a bird waster for approximately twenty seven years. I have seen rose breast grosbeel of their occasions. Their bird appeared different.  Other charvers: (1) fee
15.	Other observers: Wife
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: Birds of North america. A field guide to the birds. I tried to use the picture enclosed and my memory as possible to describe this birds.
19.	How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? About eight days. I was waiting for a form to fill out.
61	Rie O. Offert Address: 1031 H. Aue.
	te: May 30, 1890 Nevada City, State: <u>Towe</u>
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