

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/28/00

Bullock's Oriole

17 Dec 1999

Elk Horn, Sibley Co., IA

\*J. Fuller, \*T. Kent

IBL 70:43, 145; P-0633, P-0634

Record Number: 99-29

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller

Thomas H. Kent (18 Dec), 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

PHOTOGRAPHS

Randy Leete, early Dec, 2130 Park St., Elk Horn, P-0633

Thomas H. Kent, 18 Dec, P-0634, IBL 70:43

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 70:43

Records Committee: IBL 70:145

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, No doubt about this one.

A-P, Descriptions eliminate Baltimore and describe Bullock's.

Apparently no indication of introgression. Amazing photo.



C:\My Documents\Bullock's Oriole, Elk Horn, IA, 18 December 1999, T. H. Kent.tif

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE P-0634  
Elk Horn, Shelby Co., IA  
18 Dec 1999 T. H. Kent 99-29

## DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

**SPECIES:** Bullock's Oriole (Adult Male)

**LOCATION:** Yard of Randy and Rhea Leete, Elk Horn, Iowa (Shelby County)

**DATE & TIME:** 17 December, 1999 ( 10:20-10:45 AM and 11:20 AM)

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

**OTHERS:** Originally reported by Randy and Rhea Leete. With me was Karole Fuller. Also seen on this date by Mike Overton. Seen by Mob during the next four days.

**BACKGROUND:** This bird was reported via email to me by the Leetes. They stated that it had been present since early November. They were feeding it grape jelly and orange halves on the railing of their backyard deck. It was also visiting the feeder of their neighbors two houses to the east, the Woody Jacobsens. A photo taken by Randy Leete had appeared on the front page of the Elk Horn newspaper December 9. The Leetes were not home when we arrived, but almost immediately I noticed an orange bird sitting in a large tree in the side yard. I watched it there and at the feeding area on the deck for the next 25 minutes. After visiting the Jacobsens, we stopped back and saw the bird flew across the backyard into a row of pine trees to the west of the yard.

**DESCRIPTION:** The bird was generally the size and shape of a Baltimore Oriole, although it was somewhat puffed out due to the cold temperature. It was generally a brilliant yellow-orange color, not quite as orange as I would expect a Baltimore Oriole to be. Black was confined to the top of the head and front of the back, throat, wing and middle of the tail. There was also a black line through the dark eye. The rump was orange. There was a very prominent white wing patch. The dark bill was relatively thin and sharp-pointed. The legs were light colored. I watched it sit in the tree, preen, and fly to the deck and eat grape jelly.

**SIMILAR SPECIES:** This is the only orange oriole that exhibits a large white wing patch, and a dark eye line on an otherwise orange face.

**VIEWING CONDITIONS & OPTICS:** It was late morning of an overcast winter day. I was using 10 X 50 Bushnell Elite binoculars, looking from the car and sidewalk toward the north and northwest at distances of 40-50 feet.

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** I have seen numerous birds of this species in the western US.

**REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES:** I looked at the National Geographic guide before, during, and after the viewing. Field notes were made in the Jacobsen's house immediately after viewing, and this form was typed on 21 December.



## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

**Species:** Bullock's Oriole; **Number:** 1 adult male fresh basic

**Location:** 2130 Park St., Elk Horn, Shelby Co., IA

**Date:** 18 December 1999; **Time:** 10:15 to 10:50 a.m.

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

**Others before/with/after:** According to Randy and Rhea Leete, the bird was first found by their son on 4 Nov 1999.

Randy Leete photographed the bird. The bird was seen yesterday by Jim Fuller and Mike Overton. Dixie Overton was there when Dick Tetrault and I arrived.

**Habitat and circumstances:** The Leete home is on the northwest edge of Elk Horn with open farmland to the north, and a row of conifers to the west. The bird comes to orange slices and grape jelly on the railing of their patio, as well as to bird feeders and a neighbors feeder.

**Description of bird:** An obvious oriole with orange underparts, black and white upperparts, and long pointed decurved bill. The bill is blue-gray, as are the legs and feet. A narrow, long, black throat patch is located centrally. The lores and eye are black, and there is a thin black line from the posterior aspect of the eye to the dark area running from the top of the head down the nape. The top of the head is dark but not quite black. The orange superciliary lines meet over the base of the bill. There is a black dot at the base of the lower mandible. There is a large white wing patch (greater and median coverts) and the tertials and secondaries have a wide white edge. The primaries are thinly edged and tipped with white. The back and scapulars are black centrally and fringed with dull greenish-orange, giving a cross hatched appearance. The anterior scapulars are mostly black with a thin edging. The rump is dull orange and upper tail black with orange outer edge except toward the tip. The undertail is yellow orange.

**Voice:** not heard.

**Similar species:** The black throat patch, orange face with black eyeline, large white wing patches, and black upper tail distinguish this bird from Baltimore Oriole. The light edging on the back and scapulars indicates fresh basic plumage, which with wear becomes black in spring. An immature bird would not have the well-developed features of an adult male. Orioles undergo only one moult per year (Jaramillo and Burke 1999). The blacker appearance in spring is attained by feather wear, which eliminates the lighter fringe.

**Any one have reservations?:** no

**Light:** overcast foggy day; **Distance:** 15 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular, 400 mm lens.

**Previous experience:** I have seen this species in the west.

**References before/after viewing:** None before; Robbins during; other field guides and Jaramillo, A., and Burke, P. 1999. *New World Blackbirds The Icterids*. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, N. J. while writing this report. I also used 4 photos in compiling this description.

**Time of notes:** none; **Final typing:** 4 hours