

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

Accepted by CBC
Editor

1. Species Pine Grosbeak
 2. Number One
 3. Location North East edge of Mark Sand Prairie, Black Hawk County, IA
 4. Date: December 27, 1980
 5. Time Bird Seen: 3:00 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.
 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): The bird seen was Robin sized and was observed by me only as it was flying from a cedar tree to another cedar tree. In the short space and time span that it was seen the following characteristics were noted: the bird was a reddish-pink on the head, breast, neck and rump. There were a few dark feathers that made the back appear dusky red. Small white wing bars were noticeable. The wings and tail were black. The sides, flanks and vent area was a vivid gray color contrasting with the red and black areas of the rest of the bird. The bill was large and had a steel gray or blackish color to it. The feet could not be seen since I only saw it in flight a couple of times and they were pulled up close to the body.
 7. Description of voice, if heard: Not heard
 8. Description of behavior: Very tame, did not want to fly very far when flushed. Also has fairly slow flight. Very hard to flush from cedar trees.
 9. Habitat - general: Sand Prairie with several clumps and rows of cedar trees.
specific: Small double row of cedar trees about 25 feet long and about 10 feet high
 10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: Male Purple Finch is smaller and lacks white wing bars. I saw a male and female Purple Finch at the same location and they were quite a bit smaller than the Grosbeak.
 11. Distance (how measured)? 5 to 10 feet (eye)
 12. Optical equipment: eyes
 13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Mostly cloudy, sun behind me as I faced North bird flew from West to East in front of me. Sky bright.
 14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: No previous experience with this species. Have seen Purple and House Finches prior to this sighting of the Grosbeak.
 15. Other observers: Milo Meham
 16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Milo Meham.
 18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Birds of North America, Robbins, Bruun, Zimm + Singer; Guide to Birds of North America, East, Peterson; Birds of Canada, Godfrey. Reinforced and confirmed my identification of the above described bird.
 19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 18 hours.
- Signature: Francis A. Moore Address: 264 Western Ave.
Date: December 28, 1980 City, State: Waterloo, IA 50701