

What species? Purple Finch (Carpodacus purpureus) How many? 1 adult maleLocation? Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest, Lee County, IowaType of habitat? Open woodland, woodland edgeWhen? date(s): Aug. 28, 1985 time: 8:30 AM to 8:35 AMWho? your name and address: Robert Cecil 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: Noothers before or after you: No

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.

NOTE: I decided to document this early date even though ^{location} it is a record date by only one day because 1), extreme SE Iowa seemed an unlikely ~~for~~ such a winter resident to appear first, and 2), because of the possibility of confusion with House Finch (which at first glance is what I thought I'd found.)

* * *

While winding up the morning at Shimek, I was walking past a heavily overgrown old clearing and observed a dingy red bird sitting on a bare branch perhaps 4 feet off the ground. When I put my binoculars on it, I could clearly make out that it was a finch. Taking into account the date and the bird's general features, I excitedly thought I had found my first Iowa House Finch, a species with which I have had little experience. The only field mark of the species which I could remember off hand was the streaking along the sides, which I looked for and could not make out (except perhaps for some very indistinct reddish streaks). Other features observed at this time included a reddish cap, and a conspicuous red rump ("raspberry" describes it quite well). A lighter ~~streak~~^{eye} streak was also noted. The bird's overall size was comparable to a House sparrow. The bird flew, so I got out my Peterson's (1980) which I was carrying (Fall Warblers were around) and tried to make the bird into a House Finch. It was clear that most of the features I observed pointed more to Purple Finch, so I looked for the bird again. I found it quickly, this time looking at the bird's back. The back was clearly raspberry colored and streaked. The breast and throat were of the same general Raspberry color as the crown and rump (maybe slightly duller than rump). No sounds were heard from the bird. Behavior, ~~except~~ except when it was dodging a harrassing Catbird, was more lethargic than active (of course, I had been watching Warblers all morning). The bird stayed low, and flew only short distances.

Similar species and how eliminated: House Finch has gray/ brown cap, brown, not reddish back. House Finch also has streaks on sides. This bird had unstreaked sides.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? N.A.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Lighting fair to good, sun usually over left shoulder. Distance, 35-40' (estimate)
Optics: 10 x 40 Zeiss Dialyt

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen many Purple finches (and should have recognized this instantly.) Have seen House Finches about 15 months ago in Seattle, Wash.

References and persons consulted before writing description:
Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds (1980) during identification only.

How long before field notes made? Not made this form completed? 1 hour.

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