

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS – SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

Date(s): September 8, 2002.

Number seen: one.

Sex: female.

Plumage: first fall.

Locality: Southwest side of Martin Lake at Lathrop State Park.

Elevation: unknown.

Nearest town: Walsenburg.

County: Huerfano.

Time observed: 300pm to 330pm MDT.

Duration of observation: 15 minutes, off and on.

Description (including habitats, and behaviors): Lisa Edwards and I were birding at Lathrop State Park, and found quite a few small birds, including sparrows, and Lazuli Buntings, when I spotted a small bird that looked green. After getting good views of it, I was able to identify it as a female Painted Bunting. Lisa hadn't got on the bird at first, though then she did. The bird was mostly feeding in the dry weeds with the other birds, and then flew up into the Russian olive trees.

It was small, about the small size as the nearby male and female Lazuli Buntings. The first thing I noticed about the bird was the all green upper parts, which included the head, back, wings, and tail. No wing bars and tail was green and not blue like the near by Lazuli Buntings. The bill was small and dark. The eyes were dark. The face was green with no noticeable eye ring. The entire underparts of the bird were pale yellow, including the chin, throat, breast, belly, and undertail coverts. The bird was pretty dull looking overall, though the green color on the upper parts stood out. The bird stayed in the open giving good views. We had nice comparisons with the female Lazuli Buntings also present. The shape of the bird was like the Lazuli Buntings near by, though the belly looked more full, so not as thin looking as the female Lazuli Buntings near by. I believe that the under parts of the bird would have been brighter yellow, if the bird was an adult female or first fall male. A brighter female Painted Bunting was seen in Pueblo, a couple of days after this sighting.

How were similar species eliminated: Other species of buntings do not have green upper parts. Also, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings have wing bars. The shape and size eliminate large species like tanagers. Warblers and vireos have different shaped bills. Not sure what other species would look like a female Painted Bunting, I believe none.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):
None heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I've seen a few female Painted Buntings in southwest Kansas in September a few years ago. In Colorado, I have seen females twice before, one at Fort Lyon Wildlife Easement and one at Hasty Campground. I have seen an adult male Painted Bunting in Colorado once at Cottonwood Canyon. Also, adult males in Texas and eastern Kansas. I have seen all the other buntings, included one female Blue Bunting, and several Varied Buntings in Arizona. Also, lots of Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, including Lazuli while looking at this Painted Bunting.

Light conditions: Excellent, cloudy, sun wasn't a factor.

Optical equipment used: 10x42 binoculars.

Distance and how estimated: 15 to 20 feet.

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Lisa Edwards.

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none that I know of. I did report the bird on cobirds.

If photographed, type of equipment and film: not photographed.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, ect. Consulted and how this influenced your identification:
The Sibley Guide to the Birds, to figure out the age of the bird.

a) at time of observation: none. **b) after observation:** yes.

Reporting observer: Brandon Percival

Signature: *Brandon K. Percival*

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Notes made during and after the sighting.

Report finished: 2/8/03 10:12 PM