

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Rose-breasted Grosbeak Scientific Name: *Phoebastria ludovicianus*

Date: ^{Twice} 1) 11/3/85 2) 11/5/85 Time: 12:30pm both times Length of time observed: 1) about 3 minutes 2) about 30 seconds

Number: one Age: ? Sex: Female

Location: Hansen Hollow - a gully at the mouth of Parleys Canyon in Salt Lake City.

Lat/long: Block #6 Elevation (if known): about 5,000 feet

Distance to bird: about 20 feet Light conditions: 1) Clear and back lit 2) overcast and back lit

Optical equipment: Nikon 8x20 binoculars

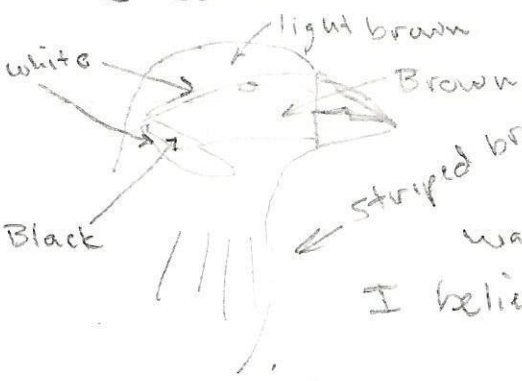
Weather: 1) clear and cool 2) overcast and cold.

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The bird was sitting quietly and fully exposed on a branch both times I saw it. The thing that caught my attention was the large bill. I'd seen several black-headed grosbeaks the previous summer and immediately believed I was seeing a female black-headed grosbeak.

I was particularly struck by the markings on the breast. Notes taken at the time indicated the upper breast was "boldly streaked" while the lower breast or belly were "snow white, clean." The breast markings were very distinct. I detected no hint of red on the breast. The wings were dark brown with white marking. I didn't notice the pattern of the marking.

The head markings were clear, but not as crisp as shown in the books. Here's a drawing I made ^{immediately} after the first sightings.



I did not see a stripe down the top of the head. I did not see the wing linings.

Regarding the size, I first thought it was a large sparrow. If my memory is accurate, I believe it was slightly smaller than a robin.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: silent

Behavior: Both sightings: it was sitting quietly on a branch about 5 feet off the ground. It seemed as interested in me as I was in it. After a few minutes of watching me (the first time) it flew quickly and low into a clump of trees where I lost it.

Habitat: ^{nearby} large tree adjacent to a riparian area.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

1) Female black headed grosbeak. None of the females in my 3 books had a heavily streaked upper breast and clear, white lower breast. I checked the female black-headed grosbeaks at the University of Utah and all had a distinct orange hint and light streaks. The bird I saw had distinct markings on the breast and a snow white belly. I saw no hint of the orange that was so obvious on the female black-headed grosbeaks.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

Several sightings of black-headed grosbeaks (both male and female) during the previous summer. I have never before seen a Rose-breasted grosbeak.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Books: 1) Birds of North America, National Geographic Society 2) Golden Guide to Field Identification, Birds of North America 3) Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds. Also reviewed black-headed grosbeaks specimens at the University of Utah. Asked Ella Sorensen for advice.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

First female rose-breasted grosbeak in Utah?

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

See other side

Description from notes taken at time of sighting notes made later from memory

Observer: Jim Woolf
Address: 2522 So. 1800 East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84106

Signature: James H. Woolf

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Clyde Buffa - I was told he saw it a day or two later.

Date prepared: 11/18/85

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120