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Kathy DeLara

Marie Smith

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First Documented Nebraska Record of Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

Kathy DeLara
Mitchell NE
renosmom@charter.net

Marie Smith
Gering NE
mlou_smith@yahoo.com

On the morning of May 7, 2012, I was checking Facebook when I saw a post on Jane's Greenhouse wall about a hummingbird that was in one of their greenhouses. Since it was an unusual time to be seeing a hummer in this area I headed right over to confirm the sighting. Jane's Greenhouse is a small retail greenhouse located on the west edge of Scottsbluff, NE.

Fully expecting to see a Broad-tailed Hummingbird, I went inside to see if it was still there and didn't even bother taking the spare set of binoculars that I had in the car. I went into the greenhouse and saw the hummingbird flitting around the flowers in the hanging baskets that were for sale. There were only a couple of customers in the greenhouse and the bird didn't seem bothered by us at all. I watched it for a minute or so and saw that it was a female hummingbird, mostly green and white, and realized that it wasn't a Broad-tailed after all, so I went out to the car to get the spare binoculars. As I watched it fly back and forth, sometimes only a few feet away, I decided that it was a Ruby-throated or possibly a Black-chinned Hummingbird. It was a more slender shape than the Broad-tailed and didn't have any rufous coloring on it anywhere, but I wasn't sure what to look for to make the distinction between the two, so went back out to the car for my *Sibley Guide to Birds*. I checked the Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbird descriptions to see what to look for and went back into the greenhouse to observe the hummer again.

The bird would sit still for only a few seconds at a time, and I really couldn't be positive of the wing shape or color, although it did seem to be a dull green. The bird was pumping its tail, which the Black-chinned does and the Ruby-throated doesn't, and by that time I was pretty sure it was a Black-chinned Hummingbird. I decided that I really needed a picture of the bird for a positive identification. I didn't have a camera with me so I called Marie Smith to see if she was available to go to the greenhouse and take some pictures. When I got back to work, I posted the sighting on NEBirds and waited for the pictures. Marie emailed that she had looked at the pictures and thought it was a Black-chinned Hummingbird. After work I picked up the photo CD from Marie with the dozens of pictures she had taken.

In the pictures I could see the primaries on a perched bird had wide, rounded tips, most notably in the outer primaries (numbers 7-9, see photo on page 21), the head was more gray than green, and the bill was slightly decurved. All of that, along with the tail pumping, made me sure it was a Black-chinned Hummingbird. I emailed a few of the pictures to Ross Silcock and Mark Brogie for confirmation and status. Ross confirmed that it was a Black-chinned Hummingbird. I thought that there was at least one other confirmed sighting of a Black-chinned Hummingbird a few years ago, but Mark informed me that there were some reports but none confirmed in Nebraska. At that time I again posted the sighting on NEBirds and hoped the bird would stick around long enough for others to see it. Documentation, including photos taken by Marie Smith, was later provided to the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (NOURC) and this sighting was subsequently accepted as the first documented record for the species in Nebraska (Mark Brogie, NOURC Chairperson, personal communication).

The next day I stopped by to check on the bird during my lunch break. It was still there, but it was stressed and there were a lot more people in the greenhouses shopping. I figured it would be leaving the greenhouse soon and when I called the greenhouse later in the afternoon, I was told that it was gone. I believe Marie and I were the only birders who saw this bird.

The Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) is the western counterpart of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*). The Black-chinned breeds throughout western North America, from northern Mexico and Texas north to Washington and southern British Columbia (Baltosser and Russell 2000). Breeding ranges of the Black-chinned and Ruby-throated overlap only in east-central Texas (Arnold 1995), but the Black-chinned does occasionally wander into the eastern United States in fall and winter (Hilton 2008). In the western United States, it is abundant and is noteworthy for being a generalist and occurring in a variety of habitats (Baltosser and Russell 2000).

Black-chinned Hummingbirds have been recorded outside of Nebraska relatively close to Scottsbluff in the following areas: Weld Co., Colorado, (CDOW [date unknown]), Rawlins Co., Kansas (Otte 2013), and Natrona and Laramie Cos., Wyoming (eBird 2012).

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