

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Nebraska Bird Review

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

---

6-1990

## Notes *Nebraska Bird Review* (June 1990)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev>



Part of the [Poultry or Avian Science Commons](#), and the [Zoology Commons](#)

---

"Notes *Nebraska Bird Review* (June 1990)" (1990). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 549.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev/549>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Nebraska Bird Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

### NOTES

**EAGLE SURVEY NOTE.** This part of the Eagle Survey report was lost between the bottom of page 29 and the top of page 31 of the March issue (*NBR* 58:29-31):

\*The unknown eagle under Niobrara was not identified as either Bald or Golden; all others were Bald Eagles.

— *Greg Wingfield, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission*  
*Rt. 4, North Platte, NE 69101*

**PAINTED BUNTING** On 21 May 1988 I spotted a Painted Bunting in the cemetery (nearest to the road leading to the Monument) on the western edge of Gering, Scotts Bluff Co. I saw the bird at approximately 11:30 AM. It appeared in a wood pile at the north edge of the ravine which bordered the southern edge of the cemetery. The light conditions were good at the time — full sunlight was above and to my left, and no branches obstructed my view of the Bunting. The bird was in plain view for about 15 to 20 seconds, whereupon it dove further back into the pile. Further attempts to find it, both by myself and by those who went back later, were unsuccessful.

The bird was shaped like a chubby goldfinch, typical of what any species of bunting would be shaped like. The head was rounded, the body proportioned like a finch rather than a warbler; rounder overall. The tail did not ex-

tend more than about an inch past the body. I did not note the bill shape as I looked for other field marks first. The bird was *all green*, but it was not all the same shade of green. The head, dorsal regions, and wings were all one shade of bright green, close to what I would call kelly green. This color was consistent throughout these areas of the bird; there was no streaking on the back, no rump or crown coloration, no facial markings, nor any difference in wing color with the exception of the two wingbars, which were the same color as the bird's ventral side, a more lime-colored green, more yellow in tone than the dorsal, but still primarily green. This color extended from throat to crissum, and again there was no inconsistency of color -- no streaking, no spotting, nor any other typical underside markings. As for the other parts of the bird, the eye was dark, and I particularly took notice of the flesh around the eye because it was also a very bright green. I did not record leg color.

The gestalt of the bird was typical of a member of the sparrow/finch family. The bird sat still while I watched it until I got closer. It did not hop or jump around like a warbler is apt to do, and this allowed me to make a reasonably thorough examination of the bird. I did not identify the bird right away, but I knew it was something different. The shape of the bird suggested goldfinch or bunting, and the coloration female. Other buntings were eliminated easily. The bird was too green to be an American Goldfinch. Lesser Goldfinch, which has been seen recently in western Nebraska, was also eliminated under plumage concerns. Vireos were eliminated because all have some other color than green, or some facial markings. The bird's general body shape also eliminated vireos. The two birds I considered most closely were Tennessee and Orange-crowned Warblers. I was able to eliminate Tennessee immediately because of the lack of gray on this bird. I also observed Tennessees in the cemetery and ruled these out as a possibility through indirect comparison. Orange-crowned was eliminated, given the following four factors;

1. Orange-crowns flit far more than this bird did,
2. The shape of the Orange-crowned is rounder, with a much smaller tail, and the bird was bigger than an Orange-crowned,
3. The green on an Orange-crowned is more olive than on this bird, and
4. There were no streaks on this bird's chest, as are often found on an Orange-crowned at close range and in good light.

The general shape of the bird also suggested bunting, but I did not consider Painted Bunting until about an hour later. Upon consulting various field guides I found the bird I saw was an adult female Painted Bunting.

Painted Buntings have been seen in Nebraska on several occasions, and spring migration is when most of the records are (see Johnsgard 1986, Bray et al 1986). While an escaped cage bird is possible, the brightness of the plumage suggests that this was a wild bird. Also, given the weather conditions just prior to the sighting -- strong, 50 mph south winds, followed by three days of rain where bird movement was minimal -- a spring migration overshoot is certainly viable. In fact, the only record accepted in Bray is for Scotts Bluff Co. on 14 May 1968, a similar date to this sighting.

A copy of this report has been forwarded to the NOU Records Committee for consideration.

Literature Cited

- Bray, T. E., B. K. Padelford, and W. R. Silcock. 1986 *The Birds of Nebraska: a Critically Evaluated List*. Published by the authors. Bellevue, NE.
- Johnsgard, Paul J. 1986. *A Revised List of the Birds of Nebraska and Adjacent Plains States*. NOU Occasional Paper No. 6, Lincoln, NE.

--- Ray Korpi, NW 1585 Turner Drive #13, Pullman, WA 99163

**GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES** This is a picture I took through my kitchen window of the Gray-crowned Rosy-finches feeding on sunflower seeds. These birds come to our area (Sioux Co.) nearly every winter. They usually stay in the weeds and sunflowers along the creek.



This year (1989, *NBR* 57:80) they found the sunflower seeds I put out for the Chickadees and Juncos and have really made a mess of this area of the porch! One morning we counted 38 there.

--- Helen Hughson, Route 2, Mitchell, NE 69357