

31-92-29

A

RARE BIRD REPORT--SIGHT RECORD

REPORT FILED BY: Alan E. Versaw
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SPECIES: Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*)

DATE(S): 7/17/92

OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: M PLUMAGE: Adult

LATILONG: 25 ELEVATION: 8200

TIME OF DAY: 6:30-7:30 pm LOCALITY: Great Sand Dunes NM

NEAREST TOWN: Mosca COUNTY: Alamosa

DURATION OF OBSERVATION: Several observations over the hour totalling perhaps 20 minutes or so.

OTHER OBSERVERS: Stuart W. Schneider (park ranger, #9 Pinyon Circle, Mosca, CO 81146), Ruth Ann Versaw

LIGHT CONDITIONS: The bird was mostly in the shade of a house or of pinon trees but did come into direct evening light on several occasions.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: Swift Audobon 8.5X44 and Bushnell 10X50 binoculars. On several occasions the bird was too close to use either pair of binoculars.

DISTANCE: 3 feet to as far as 20 feet away (estimated)

PHOTO DATA: na

BIRD BEHAVIOR: The bird was first noticed when a very large hummingbird came to a feeder frequented by Broad-Tailed and Rufous Hummingbirds. It scared quickly and retreated to a pinon tree where it sat in the open for several minutes. Over the next hour it came to the feeder another 5 or 6 times but would retreat to the same pinon tree when any other hummingbird approached the feeder. Once or twice it attempted to feed while hovering, but mostly he would try to perch at the feeder. To feed, he would have to arch his neck considerably in order to get his bill into the feeder port. When approaching the feeder, his wingbeats were much slower than those of the smaller hummingbirds.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: Overall, this was a dark hummingbird much larger than the Rufous or Broad-Tailed which were also present. When hit by the light the throat was a bright emerald green. There was a fairly large purple area on the crown which was visible only at close range or when there was direct light on his head. The tail, in flight, was rather squared at the end, was never fanned, and had no white feathers. There was a vertically oriented white line behind the eye which was slightly wider at the bottom than at the top. Also, there was a horizontally oriented white line below and in front of the eye. This line barely shows in the Natl. Geo. guide painting of the bird, but was more visible on the bird we saw.

SONG AND/OR CALL: None was given that we heard.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: The bird was at a residential feeder surrounded by pinon/juniper.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILAR SPECIES: the Blue-Throated Hummingbird was the only other bird we considered as a possibility, partly because the white lines around the eye of this bird seemed more obvious than they do in the field guide paintings. However, the

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complete lack of white in the tail, the purple crown, and the green throat eliminated the Blue-Throated Hummingbird from consideration rather quickly.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR BIRDS: This is my first sighting of either a Magnificent or a Blue-Throated Hummingbird. The same holds true for all other people who saw the bird.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: At the time of the sighting we consulted the National Geo guide and the Golden guide. When I got home, I also looked at the Peterson guide but this added no new information.

DATE OF REPORT: Report written 7/20/92 from notes made on 7/17/92.

SIGNATURE: