

**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
SIGHT RECORD FORM**  
RESULTS: \_\_\_\_\_

R-12 Dec 01

SPECIES: BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD  
(COMMON NAME)*Lampornis clemenciae*  
(SCIENTIFIC NAME)

DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE: 30, 31 August 2001

DATE OF THIS OBSERVATION: 30 and 31 August 2001

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1

SEX: probable female

PLUMAGE: juvenile and/or female?

EXACT LOCATION: 25 S. Indiana Place (Green Mtn. area), Golden

COUNTY: Jefferson

NEAREST TOWN: Lakewood

ELEVATION: approx. 6,040 ft.

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: approx. 1 min. total

TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 8/30 pm; 8/31 11:00am)

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW AND INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD(S): None.

WEATHER &amp; LIGHT CONDITIONS [QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION]:

Weather was clear both days. Viewing conditions were excellent in the morning light on 8/31.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED:

None on 8/30. Bushnell 10x binoculars on 8/31.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): Estimate as close as 10 to 15 ft. on 8/30

WAS THE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? No  
WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS?

IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOGRAPHS?

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED: Suburban yard hummingbird feeder.

BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION): The bird was observed attending a hummingbird feeder. The first time I saw it, I did not have binoculars with me, but was close (10-15 ft.) to the feeder. What initially caught my eye was the relatively slow wing beat as the bird flew in to the feeder. This slow wing beat was quite observable for the few seconds the bird hovered at the feeder. When it finished feeding, it fanned its tail "flashing" conspicuous large white corners on its tail, and flew off. The bird's behavior the second, and final, time I observed it was similar to the first observation. It was observed fanning its tail 2 or 3 times while hovering at the feeder.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD(S) [INCLUDE OVERALL SIZE AND SHAPE; PLUMAGE DETAILS INCLUDING HEAD, THROAT, UNDERSIDES, NAPE, BACK, WINGS, AND TAIL; AND COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYE, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT IN MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MARKS USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD(S)].

This was a relatively large hummingbird. My initial impression on 8/30 (no binoculars) was as follows: relatively slow wing beats for a hummingbird, back greenish, underparts quite uniformly gray, tail quite large and black with conspicuously large white spots on the outer corners (no discernible rufous color at the base of the tail). I also thought I saw a white line behind the eye. The second observation (8/31) (with binoculars) confirmed the field marks I had seen on 8/30 (green upperparts appearing somewhat bronze green toward the rump, uniform gray underparts including throat, large black tail with large white outer corners and completely lacking any rufous color). I was also able to clearly see a prominent white post-ocular stripe separating the bird's green crown (same color as upper back) from the gray auriculars. There was also a relatively inconspicuous whitish or pale gray "mustache" extending back from the base of the bill to below the eye.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW THEY WERE ELIMINATED:

The species most likely to be confused with female/juvenile Blue-throated Hummingbird is the female/juvenile Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*). Both are large hummingbirds and are about the same size overall (5" plus or minus) with

relatively slow wing beats compared with smaller hummingbirds. Differences in appearance between the two species which I think support ID as Blue-throated Hummingbird include:

1. white on corners of tail: larger on BTHU, smaller on female MAHU. When this bird fanned its tail, it flashed very large white corners on the tail. These were conspicuous even without binoculars, and were well seen both times.
2. color of upper side of tail: black on BTHU; mostly green on female MAHU. This bird had a black tail except for the large white corners.
3. face pattern: BTHU has a conspicuous white post-ocular stripe; MAHU has a white post-ocular spot. This bird had an obvious white post-ocular stripe curving back and down.

The conspicuous white post-ocular stripe combined with the all black tail with large white corners and complete lack of rufous also eliminates the "expected" species (Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus*, Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*), and these characteristics plus the large size eliminate Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope*.

#### PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES:

I have experience observing Blue-throated Hummingbirds in southeastern Arizona and Big Bend Nat'l. Park, Texas. I have also seen a female/juvenile Blue-throated Hummingbird at a feeder in a yard on Gap Rd., Jefferson Co., Colorado in Sept. 1982.

I have experience with Magnificent Hummingbird in Arizona and one sighting in Colorado (an adult male).

#### BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS, OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THESE INFLUENCED IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

No field guide was used at the time of first observation. Several references were consulted while I was trying to confirm ID of the bird on 8/30 and to verify the ID on 8/31. These included:

1. Sibley, David A., The Sibley Guide to Birds. (2000).
2. Nat'l. Geographic, Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 3rd ed. (1999).
3. Howell, Steve N. G. & Sophie Webb. A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America (1995).

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING \_\_\_\_\_ OR AFTER X OBSERVATION, OR  
LATER FROM MEMORY \_\_\_\_\_  
*immediately after each obs.*

ADDITIONAL NOTES: I saw this hummingbird only twice, each time for a relatively short duration (maximum of 30 seconds for each sighting). On 8/30, I was working in a garden near (within 10 feet of) my hummingbird feeder (no binoculars with me) when I saw a hummingbird come in to the feeder. What caught my eye initially was the bird's quite discernible wing beats; they seemed much slower than the Broad-tailed Hummingbirds and Rufous Hummingbirds that are my "usual" yard hummingbirds. Since no other hummingbirds were feeding at the time, I did not get a direct size comparison, but my impression was of a relatively large hummingbird (certainly as large as a Broad-tailed Hummingbird). Since I suspected that it might be either a Blue-throated Hummingbird (most likely) or a Magnificent Hummingbird from the field marks I had seen on 8/30, I was on the lookout for the bird beginning early in the morning on 8/31, this time with binoculars handy. Even though I watched most of the day until dark, I only saw the bird come to the feeder one time at about 11:00 am. This time I was able to observe it for several seconds with binoculars in bright sunlight and was able to confirm the ID in my mind. I watched for the bird to reappear the rest of the day, on the evening of 9/1 and on 9/2 but never saw it again (on 9/1, I spent most of the day birding in northeastern Colorado with Joey Kellner and Andrew Spencer). Because of its failure to reappear even one more time, I decided it would be futile to report it to the Colorado Bird Report. It is interesting that on 8/31, there seemed to be more birds than usual around my yard including several probable migrants (House Wren, Western Tanager, and Green-tailed Towhee). I had not noticed any of these species on 8/30 nor did I see them subsequently.

DATE OF THIS WRITTEN REPORT: December 2, 2001

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SIGNATURE:

*Dick Schottler*