

7-0 (A)

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X**Species:** Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

Rcd 9/2/00 wpl

Date: 1 June 1999**Number seen:** one**Sex:** male**Plumage:** Def. Alternate**Locality:** Cottonwood Canyon**Elevation:** 4800'**Nearest town:** Pritchett**County:** Las Animas**Time observed:** about 11:05 - 11:06 MDT**Duration of observation:** total of about 45 seconds

Description: I stopped in at Cottonwood Canyon on my way to Kiowa NG in New Mexico. Shortly after I got out of my car at the usual parking area, I heard a *Passerina* bunting singing. Since it sounded odd for either Lazuli or Indigo and since there had been a Painted seen there in May, I went to investigate. Before I made it to the main road heading toward the side canyon (the one with the old out buildings), I saw a bird teed up on a sapling about 3m north of the road. It was facing me and singing. It was obviously a Painted Bunting.

The bird was bright! The head was mostly a medium blue (paler than that of Indigo, but darker than that of Lazuli), except for the red chin and throat and an obvious red eyering. The bill and eyes were dark. The entire underparts (at least to the legs) were bright red. The legs were dark. I did not see the vent nor the upperside of the bird, as it only perched facing me and when it left, it dropped below and behind vegetation too quickly for me to get my binoculars on it.

Similar species eliminated by description: There is really nothing that is similar to an adult male Painted Bunting. The song was similar to that of a Lazuli, but was somehow different, less full. Interestingly, a few minutes later, an adult male Indigo Bunting was singing from almost the exact spot and was apparently counter-singing with an adult male Lazuli x Indigo hybrid (which I later tracked down and photographed) on the stream side of the road. The hybrid was singing a fairly typical Lazuli song, so I was able to compare that to what I had recently heard from the Painted. This enabled me to confirm my earlier thought that the song of the Painted was different from that of Lazuli.

Note on the location: Despite most birders recording everything found in Cottonwood Canyon as in Baca County, many of the birds recorded there are actually in Las Animas County. The parking area is in Baca, but at that location, the main road is just about right on the county line. Thus, everything to the north and west of the parking area is in Las Animas County.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): A long, somewhat warbling song consisting of individual phrases connected together; similar to that of Lazuli Bunting, but less full, possibly thinner. (I'm pretty horrible at describing songs.)

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >40 Painted Buntings in Texas and Mexico and 100s to 1000s of Lazuli and Indigo buntings. I have only seen a few Varied Buntings. However, when seen, none of these species are at all similar to Painted Bunting.

Light conditions: sun overhead and slightly right of me

Optical equipment used: Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at about 20m

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: I believe that Myron and Suzi Plooster saw this returning bird (present here the previous five summers) in May (late May?).

If photographed, type of equipment and film: not photographed

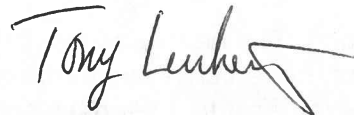
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: This report was written on 26 August 2000 from notes taken immediately after the sighting on 1 June 1999.