

NOTES ON OBSERVATIONS OF TWO LARGE HUMMINGBIRDS AT SPRINGDALE, UTAH, DURING AUGUST, 1972; BELIEVED TO BE BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS.

Aug. 3, 1972. Three observations.

When I first saw the male bird it was sitting on a perch at the back side of a feeder. My attention was first drawn to it when it moved its head around the side of the feeder, and I saw both the white postocular and rictal stripes. Since the presence or absence of the rictal stripe was one of the main distinguishing features I had watched for in identifying the female Rivoli's during the summers of 1971 and 1972, I was instantly alerted and attempted to move to a position where I could view the entire bird. My movement frightened it and it flew away before I could obtain a better view. It definitely was larger than the Black-chinned and Rufous Hummingbirds at the feeders, but my impression was that it was smaller than the female Rivoli's. I did notice a fluttering sound of its wings, similar to that I have learned to associate with the Rivoli's.

A short time later the bird returned and lit on the perch of another feeder. My view from the front showed the throat and chin to be darker than the breast, with a definite line of demarcation between the gorget and breast. From this I assumed the bird to be an immature male with a developing gorget. Again my movement for a closer view frightened it away before I could see anything more definite for identification. Its third appearance that day was even more brief, as it squared away with a male Black-chin and left in pursuit of the smaller bird.

Aug. 4, 1972. One observation late in the evening, with nothing concrete seen except the larger size.

Aug. 5, 1972. Four observations early in the morning, but again so brief that I could see nothing new for identification.

Later that morning a large female hummer came twice to the feeders. She, also, appeared to have the rictal stripe and light corners on the tail. One outstanding trait was the difference between her temperament and that of the female Rivoli's. In almost 200 observations over two summers, I had never seen the Rivoli's show aggressive action against other hummers. The new bird, however, scarcely had an opportunity to feed because she became engaged in chasing other birds from the feeders. On her first appearance she lit on a perch and fed for a few seconds, but interrupted her meal to chase a female Black-chin into a nearby tree. She then fed again briefly, but left in pursuit of an immature Rufous male. About 5 minutes later she returned to feed. After a few seconds she chased off a male Black-chin then again fed briefly. Another bird approached her and she chased it out of sight through a nearby tree. This was my last observation of this female.

Aug. 6, 1972. One excellent observation of the immature male.

About 9 a.m. I was kneeling on my walk filling a feeder when the immature male flew to an empty feeder. Failing to find syrup, it began flying warily toward the feeder in front of me. Repeatedly it would move in a foot or two, then hover as it inspected me closely. It finally came within two feet of me before becoming frightened and departing. During this time I was able to observe the major points of identification. As the bird hovered, both the postocular and rictal stripes showed distinctly. There were also large, white corners on the underside of the tail. One dischordant point was

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that, at a distance of about 4 feet, the morning sun gave a brief flash of irradiance to the gorget. The color appeared to be pale green, closer to chartreuse than to blue. This might indicate a male Rivoli's, but is not consistent with the other points of identification. Unlike the immature Rufous and Black-chinned males I see here, this bird did not show spots of intense color of a partially-developed gorget, but had an overall pattern of light irradiance on the tips of each feather.

At this point I enlisted the aid of Clyde and Lois Harden. They are wildlife photographers who have spent much time making movies of Southwestern birds. Several years ago Mr. Harden had shown me movies he had made of Blue-throats in Southern Arizona, and in all of his pictures the rictal stripe was easily observed. They offered to spend time watching my feeders while I was at work.

Aug. 8, 1972. Four observations, with three also seen by Lois Harden. Shortly before 9 a.m. on Aug. 8 Lois Harden began watching my feeders from a distance of about 30 feet. I joined her in watching, and within a few minutes she noticed a large hummer at the feeders. After feeding for a short time, the bird flew to a limb in a tree about 15 feet from us. So close was it that Lois could not focus her binoculars on it. After a few minutes it returned to the feeder, then chased a Black-chin away before alighting on a branch at the far side of the tree. A short time later the bird reappeared and again lit on a perch at the feeders. At the distance I could not see the rictal stripe, but the white tail corners showed prominently. He again interrupted his feeding to chase another hummer, then returned to the feeders briefly before alighting in a nearby tree out of sight. About 5 minutes later he fed again and then flew away to the south. Clyde Harden joined us but, although we watched until about 9:30 a.m., the bird did not appear again.

At about 10 a.m. I was looking out my window when the bird again lit on a feeder. I moved so that I was watching from a distance of about two feet. He was seated so that I had a view of the right side. After feeding, the bird sat for several minutes, and I was able to move around enough to observe him both from the back and front. The back was dull green, and this color extended over the top of the head. I could distinctly see both the postocular and rictal stripes. In addition, his tail feathers were slightly separated, with the outer right retrice showing a white tip on both the upper and lower surfaces. I also could see white on the back of the next retrice. During this time he again turned his head toward me and I noticed the spotted effect of the beginning gorget. This was the last time I saw the bird.

An interesting note was that early on this same morning the female Rivoli's had come to the feeders; the first time I had seen her since July 31. My impression at that time was that she was larger than the immature male.

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