

Observations of a Painted Redstart inHancock County, Mississippi:First State Record

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At approximately noon and again at 14:00 on 5 October 1987, we observed an adult-plumaged Painted Redstart (Myioborus pictus) in Waveland, Hancock County, Mississippi, marking that species' first occurrence in the state.

The redstart was initially seen by Toups with Cassibry, Jeffrey, and Jenkins having no difficulty in locating it within just a couple of minutes. The bird was active, flycatching between the split trunk of a large live oak, and was readily identified as a Painted Redstart without reference to a field guide. Site of the observation was from Daniel Street, looking into the trees and dense vegetation which form the southern perimeter of the Waveland Lagoon (Waveland Wastewater Treatment Plant).

The redstart was kept under observation by one or more of the observers for more than 45 min, at distances ranging from 7-15 m. During that time it kept mostly to its flycatching activity around the trunk of the oak; however, it also gleaned along the trunks, and occasionally flew down or out to a closer branch, allowing unrestricted looks from numerous angles. The bird was basically a small warbler, having a black head and upperparts, broad white wing stripes, white outer tail feathers, red breast and belly, and white from lower belly to undertail coverts. It constantly fanned its tail, exposing the white outer tail feathers.

All observers were using binoculars (7x35, 8x40 and 10x50) and had long leisurely looks at the redstart. All four observers had seen the Painted Redstart elsewhere in the United States, and two of the observers had also seen it in Mexico; all had experience with this species within four months of the above observation. Reference to the National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America (1983) confirmed the identification. On the basis of the broad white wing bars, the Slate-throated Redstart (M. *miniatus*) was eliminated.

There had been a succession of mostly dry but very windy cool fronts; the latest had come through on Saturday, 3 October. Although fall 1987 was not remarkable for western vagrants, it appears that early cool fronts did influence the rather early arrivals of some species which are primarily of western origin: Franklin's Gull (*Larus *pipixcan**), Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga *sulcirostris**), Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus *rubinus**), Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus *verticalis**), and a larger than usual number of Wilson's Warblers (*Wilsonia *pusilla**). On 5 October, we had found good transient land-bird activity around the lagoon, having recorded 18 warbler species.

Attempts to photograph the redstart were unsuccessful. We made note of its location and immediately initiated a local rare bird alert. About two hours later, Schultz relocated the bird very near where it was first seen; at that time though, it had moved into sunlight on the lagoon side of the vegetation (no camera was available to Schultz); the redstart had seemingly responded to a taped recording of the Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus *asio**). Schultz obtained unrestricted looks of the redstart, flycatching at distances between 8 and 15 m.

Beginning early in the morning of 6 October, and for approximately four hours, a diligent search of the entire vegetated area of the lagoon was made by a number of birders. Warbler activity had decreased markedly. The redstart was not found, and has not been seen since.

According to the A.O.U. Check-list of North American birds, sixth edition (1983), the Painted Redstart is primarily a Mexican species which breeds in the United States in the mountain canyons of the southwest. Although southeastern Arizona is regarded as its primary breeding area in the U.S., breeding has also been recorded in New Mexico and Texas. Painted Redstarts have occurred as vagrants in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts and

Georgia (Desante and Pyle 1986). There are two records from neighboring states: an adult was found in City Park in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 17 November 1952 (Lowery 1974), and one was seen on 28 September 1978 in Baldwin County, Alabama (Purrington 1979).

#### Literature Cited

- DeSante, D. and P. Pyle. 1986. Distributional checklist of North American birds. Artemisia Press, Lee Vining, California.
- Lowery, G.H., Jr. 1974. Louisiana birds. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge.
- Purrington, R.D. 1979. Central southern region. Am. Birds 33:188.