

PAINTED BUNTING RECORD FOR NORTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA

On the morning of 17 April 1972 an adult male Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) was observed on a feeder at the University of California's Sagehen Creek Field Station, approximately 8 miles northwest of Truckee, California. The bird was seen on the feeder or in nearby trees several times during the day. It was collected on 18 April and stored in a freezer at the research station pending preparation as a specimen. The Painted Bunting was rather wary and flew out of sight into nearby pine trees several times when I attempted to approach within collecting range. After a brief period, approximately 30 minutes, the bird would return to the feeder or vicinity. On the fourth attempt I was able to approach close enough to collect the Painted Bunting. The bird was associating with Mountain Chickadees (*Parus gambeli*) that were using the feeder. To my knowledge this is the first record of a Painted Bunting occurring in northeastern California. The Painted Bunting is listed as irregular, accidental, or casual in California (McCaskie et al., 1970).

The possibility that this bird was an escapee should not be ignored since Painted Buntings are sold in pet shops. A scar 7 mm by 5 mm, which could have been incurred while caged, was found on the bird's head between the orbits. Painted Buntings normally arrive along the Gulf Coast close to the time I observed the bird at Sagehen Creek (Lowery, 1960) and for it to stray so far from its normal course in the same amount of travel time would be unusual. Eastern species that stray into California in spring usually appear from late May to mid-June. However, the bird's wary behavior and the rather remote location of the Sagehen Creek Station tend to reduce the likelihood of the bird being an escapee. The towns nearest the station are Sierraville, 12 miles to the north and Truckee, 8 miles to the south. Reno, Nevada is situated approximately 35 miles east of the station.

Published accounts of previous Painted Bunting sightings in California have recorded this species primarily in the southern part of the state. Chase and Chandik (1966), McCaskie et al. (1967) and McCaskie (1972a, 1972b) reported sightings of 8 individual Painted Buntings in female plumage. Six of these were in southern California. The 7 adult male Painted Buntings seen in California were reported by Baldrige and Chandik (1969) and McCaskie (1968, 1972b, and 1973). Sightings of adult males in metropolitan areas have been treated as escapees, however specimens of immatures have been taken within California during the autumn indicating that stragglers do reach the state (McCaskie, 1973). The 3 male Painted Buntings reported by McCaskie (1973) were sighted far from metropolitan areas.

The one record of a Painted Bunting north of the Sagehen Creek Station was of a male collected at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon (Kridler, 1965).

LITERATURE CITED

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