

General Field Notes

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General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items. Submit manuscripts to the appropriate state editor.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

First Record of the Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) for the Eastern United States

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A large and unusual hummingbird appeared at Lori Turner's hummingbird feeder in rural northeastern Cabarrus County, North Carolina, on 12 November 2000. Susan Campbell received a call about this bird on 18 November and scheduled a banding visit for the next day. Despite the cold and snowy weather, on 19 November Campbell was able to capture and identify the hummingbird as a Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*), a species normally found in the tropics. Using a pull string trap with a sugar water feeder inside, she managed to catch the bird by mid-morning and band, measure, and photograph it. Due to mechanical difficulties with the camera, the resulting photos, although recognizable, were not of high quality.

Because of her lack of experience with the species and the paucity of information about members of the genus *Anthracothorax* in North American literature, Campbell could not immediately ascertain sex of the hummingbird, but by the corrugations on the bill she determined that it was

an immature. From later review of photographs it was almost certainly a young male. The bird had limited white at the tips of the rectrices and the ventral stripe did not extend all the way through the chin (Williamson 2001), both typical characteristics of an immature male.



Figure 1. Green-breasted Mango, Cabarrus Co., NC. Photo by Phil Kelly.

The bird was a very large hummingbird (wing 63.5 mm, weight 7.06 g). The back and head were a bright emerald green without golden or bronzy color. The underparts were multi-colored and unique for any North American hummingbird. The center of the underparts had a wide vertical band of very dark greenish-black feathers that was widest at the chest. A significant portion of the iridescent feathers comprising the upper portion of the band were a dark blue-green. This band was bordered by wide white stripes (or, basically, a dark band on white underparts), which were bordered on the sides by green flanks about concolor with the back. There was some rusty feathering along the edge of the throat and breast, in a narrow line. The head was mostly unmarked green, being slightly paler behind the eye; however, there was no eye stripe or other obvious mark, other than the unusual rusty color on the side of the throat (in the malar area).

The bill was fairly long (24.9 mm), blackish, and very distinctly decurved. There were noticeable corrugations at the base of the bill typical of a fall immature hummingbird. The tail was long (36 mm), slightly rounded and dark. The proximal end of each feather was an iridescent purple fading into an iridescent blue black distally. The purple color was not seen when the tail was folded. Also the bird had small white tips on the outer rectrices. The wings were dark but were not conspicuously black.

Its behavior was typical of other hummingbirds. It perched frequently in a pear tree and made brief sorties to the feeder, hovering and perching as is typical with the group. Neither of the authors heard it make any vocalizations.

Not surprisingly, birders not only from North Carolina but from many regions of the United States visited Ms. Turner's yard between Mount Pleasant and Concord. Harry LeGrand visited the yard with several other birders on 20 November, but the bird did not appear during the morning.

However, several out-of-state birders – including Paul Sykes from Georgia and Wes Biggs from Florida – were successful in observing the hummingbird later that day. LeGrand returned on 21 November and was successful, observing the bird with Jeff Pippen, Will Cook, Lex Glover, and several other birders. Over the next week or two, it was seen by dozens of birders and was last reported on 4 December (Davis 2001).

The NC Bird Records Committee accepted the written descriptions and photographs taken by Phil Kelly; one of Kelly's photos of the bird was published in Williamson (2001). As a result of the photo documentation of this first North Carolina record, the species was placed on the Official List (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 2002).

This species is quite distinctive from any other hummingbird occurring in the United States and Canada, and thus would seem to be an unmistakable species to identify. However, there are seven species of mango (genus *Anthracothorax*). The most similar are Black-throated (*A. nigricollis*) and Green-throated (*A. viridigula*). Neither of these, nor any other mango species, has extensive rusty feathering on the sides of the throat and breast (Howell 2002).

The Green-breasted Mango occurs from eastern Mexico to Panama, and also from northern Venezuela to northwestern Peru (del Hoyo et al. 1999, Clements 2000). The species has strayed on a handful of occasions north of Mexico, but as of 2001, all 13 United States records except for the North Carolina bird were from Texas (Checklist Committee of the American Birding Association 2002). Thus, these records do indicate that this hummingbird has a pattern of vagrancy to the north of its regular range, though the bird that appeared in North Carolina was over 1000 miles to the northeast of any other record. As a result, this is arguably one of the most unanticipated records for a stray bird for the eastern United States.

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