

First record of Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* in western Ecuador

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* is a boreal migrant that winters primarily in Middle America, where it usually reaches as far south as western and central Panama, in which country it is considered rare and local in early October to late March⁴. Although the species' southernmost breeding areas are in western Costa Rica (*P. c. lazula*), birds occurring further south are believed to belong to the eastern North American migrant nominate subspecies¹. Blue Grosbeak is a vagrant to South America with apparently only three published records: a specimen collected on 4 April 1942 in the Sierra de Perijá, south-east of Codazzi, dpto. Cesar, Colombia²; a female collected on 1 December 1964 along the río Napo in the eastern lowlands, prov. Napo, Ecuador⁵; and a male observed on 18 April 1973 in the western lowlands east of Buenaventura, dpto. Valle, Colombia¹.

On 1 August 2009 we photographed an adult male Blue Grosbeak at the edge of the Río Canandé Reserve, Hoja Blanca, prov. Esmeraldas, Ecuador (00°31'N 79°16'W; c.300 m). It was in breeding plumage and it perched atop a tree in secondary woodland (Fig. 1).

To our knowledge this is only the fourth published record of Blue Grosbeak in South America and the first for western Ecuador^{3,5}. The date is remarkable assuming it was a boreal migrant, but there have been previous records of North American migrant passerines in South America during the northern summer³,



Figure 1. Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*, Río Canandé Reserve, Hoja Blanca, prov. Esmeraldas, Ecuador, 1 August 2009 (José Ardaiz Ganuza)

albeit mostly involving common winter visitors to the continent. Records of accidental species during the boreal summer in South America are exceedingly few³.

Acknowledgements

We thank Alejandro Solano-Ugalde and Guy Kirwan for commenting on an earlier version of this note.

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Received 29 June 2010; final
revision accepted 1 January 2011
(published online 16 March 2011)