

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: [Evening Grosbeak](#) (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): [1, unknown age/sex](#)
3. Parish: [Lafayette](#)
Specific Locality: [Adrienne St x Pauline St., Lafayette \(30.23143, -92.03417\)](#)
4. Date(s) when observed: [23 December 2020](#)
5. Time(s) of day when observed: [10:39](#)
6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Erik I. Johnson
City: Sunset
State: LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): [none – Dave Patton was about 50 feet from me and I called it out after I had turned on the recording and obtained a few calls, but of course it stopped calling as soon as I said something. Frustrating.](#)
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): [none](#)
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): [overcast, but didn't see the bird](#)
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): [Vortex Razor ED 10x42 binoculars, Audio recording from Samsung S6 smartphone with RecForge Lit App](#)

11. Distance to bird(s): 200+ ft, uncertain

12. Duration of observation: About 1 minute

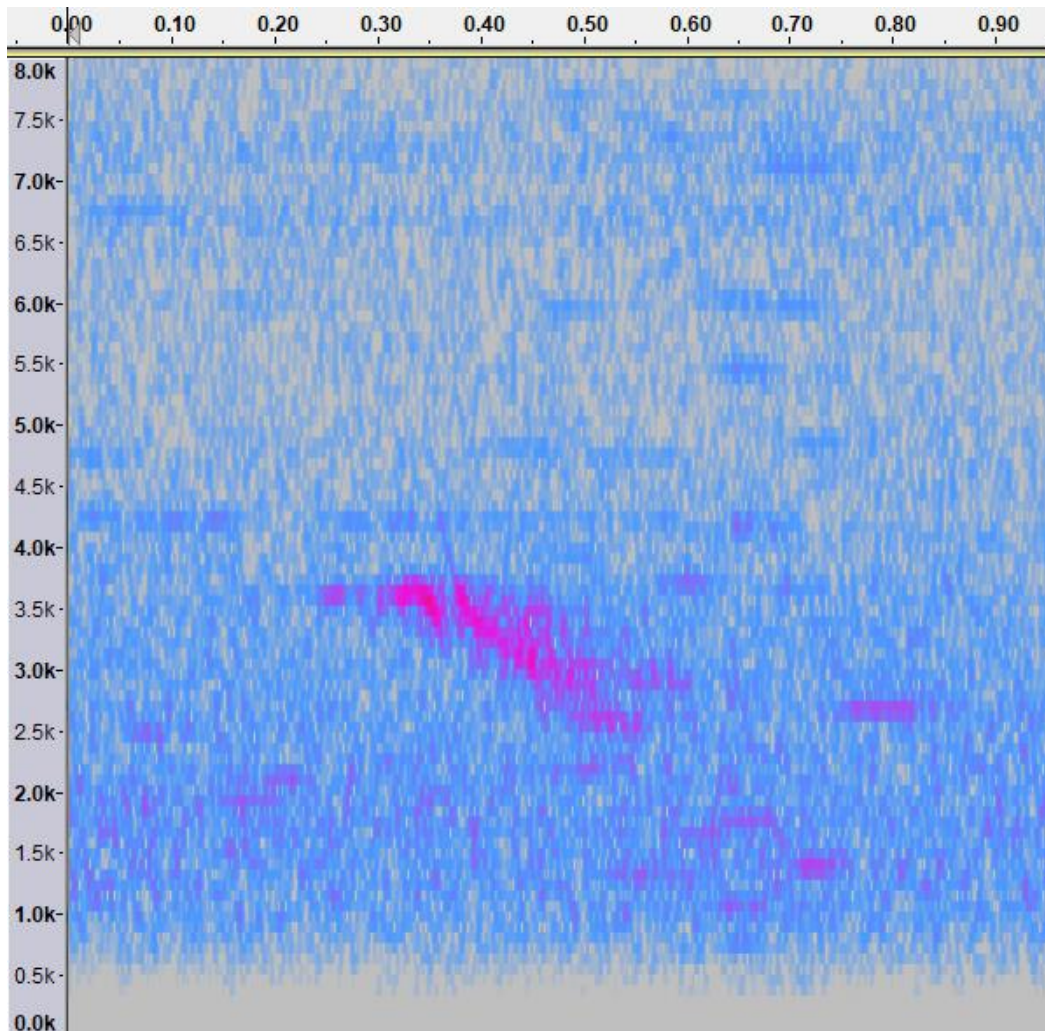
13. Habitat: Older semi-urban residential neighborhood with commercial nearby. Lots of mature canopy trees (especially live oak) and established gardens.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The call was soft at first and then became slightly louder, ultimately fading away. Seemed to be in flight and moving, at first approaching from roughly the NW and then fading off also roughly to the NW, almost as if it were circling (rather than a linear flight). The bird was never directly overhead, and I could not see it, despite the canopy being fairly open in that direction.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*): Not seen. See #16.

16. Voice: Heard a loud “jeer” call, with a downward inflection. At first I thought it was a distant Pine Siskin, but it didn’t sound as piercing or sharp. By the 2nd or 3rd call that I heard, it struck me that this was a possible Evening Grosbeak, a call I’m not familiar with in the field, but have been studying given the irruption this winter. After hearing it 3 or 4 times, I opened my phone to turn on the recorder app, and the bird called another 1 or 2 times, probably at about its peak loudness. Once I started recording, I was able to capture 6 more calls as it faded away. In total, I heard the bird give about 10-12 calls over the span of about 45 to 60 seconds.

In the recording itself, the spectrogram has features that are consistent with an Evening Grosbeak, Type 3 call. The frequency of each call is 3.0-4.0 kHz. The calls also appear to have an initial upside-down “U”, lasting about 40-60 ms, followed without a break by a downward seep that lasted about 90-110 ms.



A spectrogram of the 3rd of six flight calls recorded on 23 December 2020.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): With calls, there are all kinds of things that could potentially be confused, especially when heard at a distance. Carolina Wren and Pine Siskin are two that come to mind. The spectrogram should eliminate both of these, and given the bird seemed to have been calling from in flight, Carolina Wren is automatically eliminated. Certain thrush flight calls I suppose could also sound like this, but again, the spectrogram rules those out, and to my ear, it's not a match to any. Plus, the recording has 4 calls in a span of about 12 seconds (about the pace that it was calling pre-recording), which is not thrush-like. The oldbird.org webpage of "Flight calls of migratory birds: North American Landbirds" indicates that Evening Grosbeak is "distinct" and doesn't include it among the "thrush-like call" category.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, recordings. I am providing the original 38 second recording, as well as a shorter edited version, in which I used the "high pass filter" set to 2,000 kHz in Audacity to reduce low-frequency background noise.

19. Previous experience with this species: Very little, and essentially none when it comes to picking out flight calls. It's been 7 years since seeing them, and before that I've seen them here and there when traveling to places like New Hampshire and Washington (and during the 1996 irruption in Indiana), but the call is unfamiliar to me. I am experienced with the regularly-occurring Louisiana soundscape, and have been boning up on learning this flight call given the irruption across the east this fall & winter.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: Audubon app for Android

b. after observation: eBird blog: <https://ebird.org/news/evening-grosbeak-call-types-of-north-america>; Old Bird (Bill Evens) Flight Calls of Migratory Birds: North American Landbirds: <http://oldbird.org/pubs/fcmb/pages/species.htm>

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation. Are notes attached?	Notes in eBird were typed into my phone immediate after the observation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation. At what date?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of spectrogram	

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: I'm nearly positive. The only doubt comes from not knowing this species inside and out.

23. Date: 25 December 2020

Time: 9:00 am

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page? Yes
If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes