

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Lesser Goldfinch
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 first winter male
3. Parish: Rapides
Specific Locality: Private residence/Alexandria
4. Date(s) when observed: 13 Feb 2016
5. Time(s) of day when observed: from 6:50 a.m. to about 7:45 in two short (ca. 10 minutes per visit) feeding bouts
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul E. Conover, Lafayette, LA 70506
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Dave Patton
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): The homeowner initially IDed the birds, as well as a few birders before and subsequent to this date.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): First seen before sun had risen into yard, then in full sun
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope, Nikon D3300 w/200 mm lens.
11. Distance to bird(s): Within 25 feet
12. Duration of observation: Ca. 20 minutes total
13. Habitat: Established urban neighborhood with mature plantings of trees including a large red maple, several pines, and a hedge of bushes within the yard itself.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Bird came in to thistle sock at same time as, but not seen to be arriving with, American Goldfinches and Pine Siskins. The Lesser Goldfinch seemed to be capable of maintaining a space on the thistle sock against competition, although like all of the birds present, it was displaced several times by competitors. The bird fed for about 10 minutes per feeding, and was not detected in the half hour or so between feedings.
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*):

A small songbird with conical bill, dark to blackish dorsally, bright yellow ventrally, with

white markings in wing and tail. To the unaided eye, the bird appeared to be a “black-backed” Lesser Goldfinch, but closer looks revealed that the mantle was actually dark greenish-black, perceptibly different from black color of crown and wings.

Glossy black on crown, black on auriculars and continuing down in a falcon-like helmeted pattern onto malar region. Mantle and nape appeared black to the naked eye, but through binoculars was clearly greenish-black, the color the result of black feathers edged narrowly with yellow or greenish-yellow.

Wings blackish, with a broad white wingbar on median coverts, and an almost imperceptible fore wingbar formed of small white markings on edges of the inner webs of the median coverts. Broad white bases to inner primaries and perhaps outer secondaries extended down primaries as a white stripe from wingbar of median coverts on folded wing, and showed as a bold white flash in flight. Most of visible outer web and small tip on inner webs of tertials white. Secondaries appeared fresh, primaries appeared to be a mix of retained juvenile and replaced (at least one middle primary) feathers.

Tail black with white bases or midsections of outer 3-4 pairs of rects; those pairs with small black “dipped in ink” tips. Folded tail from beneath appeared white with black tip.

Underparts bright yellow from chin to undertail coverts, paler on vent. Small yellow semicircle on black mask, rounded side down, from mid eye forward to base of bill.

Bill horn with yellowish cutting edge. Legs dusky pinkish. Eye dark brown, surrounded by full, thin eyering.

16. Voice: Not noted in chatter of so many birds.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): No native species have this suite of features. Not sure if any cage birds do.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, video and photos.

19. Previous experience with this species: I’ve seen this species before, but generally in California where the males differ in mantle color.

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	mental
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes

23. Date: 2/14/2016