

# 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 as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: *Red-legged Honeycreeper, Cyanerpes cyaneus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
*Two: one male in non-breeding plumage, and one female/immature type*
3. Locality: Parish: Jefferson  
Specific Locality: Lafitte Woods Preserve—Landry-Leblanc Tract, Grand Isle
4. Date(s) when observed: *14 October 2022*
5. Time(s) of day when observed: *0955-1025 & 1055-1115 CDT*
6. Reporting observer and address: *Robert C. Dobbs, Lafayette, LA*
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): *I was birding solo, but many others were present while I was observing the birds, including Jane Patterson, Kathy Rhodes, Eamon Corbett, and others*
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): *Bird was first discovered by Melvin Weber. Many other observers saw and photographed the birds in the days following.*
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): *Bright sunshine of clear October sky, but generally in the shade of live oaks and other tall trees, occasionally in direct sunlight in subcanopy and when foraging in turks cap*
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): *Swarovski 8x30 binos (good condition), Nikon AF-S 300 mm 1:4 D camera lens (good condition)*
11. Distance to bird(s): *as close as 10-15 m, and as far as 30-ish m*

12. Duration of observation: 45-50 min during two separate bouts, but not continuously during those periods

13. Habitat: live oak-dominated coastal maritime forest

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Nonbreeding plumage male and female/immature-type discovered previous day (13 Oct 2022) by M. Weber. I could not find the birds during my first 2-ish hours of searching the woods, but found them foraging in a large patch of turk's cap, often hanging to probe into flowers, at a distance of 25 or so m, after other birders found them there. I later found the male foraging in mid-canopy in the area where they were originally discovered the previous day, and was able to watch and photograph it as close as 5-10 m distance, in good light beneath a broken forest canopy, under clear/sunny sky.

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): I only saw a male in nonbreeding plumage well, at close distance: a warbler-sized songbird w/ obvious long, slightly decurved black bill and short tail giving unique shape/structure; greenish crown and back; dark smudge through eye; paler green underparts, esp. toward the center of the breast/belly. Contrasting black wings except for greenish lesser coverts; short, black tail; bright red legs. Bright yellow underwing coverts seen during flight. Female/immature-type bird not seen well, and only at a distance of 25 m or so (I can describe only generally... similar to male in bill length, body proportions, etc., and greenish overall with darker, but not black, wings).

16. Voice: Not vocal during my observation

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): None, really, but I will note that Tennessee Warblers were present and, at a distance, looked superficially similar as they moved about in the vegetation, which could (conceivably) account for reports of more than two individual honeycreepers (I'm not aware that more than two individuals were documented definitively, but there were reports of more than two).

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): Photos of male only, attached, by Robert C. Dobbs

19. Previous experience with this species: None

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

a. at time of observation: None

b. after observation: Birds of the World (online); Howell and Webb (1995; field guide to birds of Mexico and northern Central America)

21. This description is written from: X notes made during the observation (     notes attached?);      notes made after the observation (date:     );      memory;      images taken during the observation.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: Yes, a straightforward ID. Provenance of these birds, however, is a topic of discussion. My opinion is that the evidence for natural vagrancy far outweighs the likelihood of these birds being escapees or originating from a provisional (not yet naturalized) population. As has been widely discussed, this (Louisiana) record occurred within days of similar records in the Florida Keys (Marathon 13 Oct 2022; Key West 14 Oct 2022) and on the upper Texas coast (Sabine Woods, 13 Oct 2022, I think), all of which corresponded with Tropical Storm Karl impacting the coast of Veracruz and Tabasco, Mexico 11-14 October 2022. Northern populations of RLHO in eastern Mexico (Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, Quintana Roo) are migratory, largely moving to the Pacific slope during Oct-Mar nonbreeding period (Howell and Webb 1995). Howell and Webb also note that RLHO occurs as a vagrant on Cozumel Island, offshore/east of mainland breeding areas, during Oct-Mar, lending further credence to the possibility of migrants being pushed out over open waters of the Bay of Campeche, and then flying across the Gulf of Mexico to Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. Such a scenario seems much more plausible than a discrete, punctuated event of escapees popping up in coastal localities from Marathon, Florida to Sabine Woods, Texas.

23. Date: 20 Nov 2022 Time: 1015 CST

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? Yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes



