

**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 March¹. 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



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

it was a boreal migrant, but there have been previous records of North American migrant passerines in South America during the northern summer³, albeit mostly involving common winter visitors to the continent. Records of accidental species during the boreal summer in South America are exceedingly few³.

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