



Painted Bunting—Richmond County
2 May 1983 *Harry Jenkins*

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

45. PAINTED BUNTING ON STATEN ISLAND

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On Monday, 2 May 1983, an adult male Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) appeared at a standing feeder in the rear yard of 21 John St., Staten Island, Richmond County, in the shadow of the Bayonne Bridge. The bird pecked at the mixed bird seed and appeared quite healthy and aggressive, successfully keeping other species away while he fed.

The Painted Bunting was first noted at about 7 a.m. by Charles and Dolores Helgesen, the owners of the house, who watched it come and go at intervals of about 20 minutes until 9 a.m., when they called us. We arrived at 9:20 a.m. and saw the bird within minutes. It was in impeccable plumage, every feather brilliant and unblemished. We studied it for at least fifteen minutes from a distance of only ten feet. We were inside the house, and the bird was unaware of our presence.

The Helgesens took several photographs, as did Harry Jenkins, who spent much of the afternoon observing the bird. One of Jenkins' photos accompanies this report.

Other local birders arrived too late to see the bird, as it left the site at about 6 p.m. and did not return.

It is interesting to note that the Helgesens' property has attracted many other unusual birds, including, during the winter of 1982-83, two Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*). One of these birds stayed for more than two months, eating grape jelly from a feeder only inches from the kitchen window. The location of the site, a half-block from the Kill van Kull and adjacent to an 11-acre brushy field, is obviously very hospitable to a wide variety of species. Green-backed Herons, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Common Barn-Owls and scores of songbirds are all included in the Helgesens' "yard list."

The sighting of the Painted Bunting marks the first Staten Island record for the species, which is very rare throughout New York State (Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 551). The lack of feather wear would indicate that this was indeed a wild bird, which may have come north during the fierce storms of a week earlier, storms which are known to have brought an influx of Indigo Buntings, among other species, to the New York area ahead of their usual schedule.

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CORRIGENDUM

"Photographs of New York Rarities" in *Kingbird* XXXIII, No. 4... "43. Chestnut-collared Longspur" should read No. 44.