

Napa-Solano Audubon's Rare Bird Alert #7 - Costa's Hummingbird 2-8-21

Greetings Napa Solano Audubon Members, Family & Friends:

Location: Periodically, we will send out Rare Birding Alerts of uncommon or rare species that have been seen in our area. Yesterday, Lucas and I returned to the Garden Neighborhoods of St. Helena to see if the male Costa's Hummingbird that we spotted on January 2nd was still present. Indeed it was, as healthy as ever, and in brilliant spring plumage. The "Garden Neighborhoods are located just North of Zinfandel Lane and can be accessed from Garden Avenue. We located the Costa's in exactly the same area as we spotted it in January, on wires and small trees and bushes along Vineland Ave. between Walnut Ave. and Zygmunt Dr. A friendly birder we met in January has been feeding it ever since from her hummer feeders at the corner of Zygmunt and Vineland.

Description: The Costa's Hummingbird is typically found in Northwestern Mexico, Southwestern Arizona and Nevada, and Southern California. They typically breed in hot Sonoran Deserts of the Southwest. In recent years there have been more migratory and winter sightings in Northern California. However, this is only the 4th eBird record in Napa County. One was seen by Murray Berner in Rector Canyon in 1984, Denise and David Hamilton had one at their feeders in 2019, and Lucas spotted one in 2020. There probably have been a few non-eBird records as well. The St. Helena bird is a splendid male with a full purple gorget and crown, dull green flanks, and brilliant green back. The gorget and crown may appear almost black in certain lights. It has a white neck, and behind and below the purple handlebar "mustache" gorget is a white patch extending from above the eye to the nape and back. One good way to help locate and identify the Costa's Hummingbird is to listen for the male's high, clear ascending and descending song given while perched or in flight, especially in breeding season. Hearing this song is how Lucas spotted the Garden Neighborhood bird. The female has a sharp tic or double tick not unlike a Bushtit, or twitter call note that is distinctly different from an Anna's. No other hummers in our area have similar calls. For more information see Cornell's Birds of the world located at: <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/coshum/cur/introduction> . For more information about our sighting and additional photos taken by Lucas and me see our eBird report located at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S80618501> .





Happy Birding,
Mark Stephenson