

## FIRST HOODED ORIOLE RECORD FOR WESTERN CANADA

Audrey Wallis  
2072 Weiler Avenue  
Sidney, B.C. V8L 1R4

*Abstract* -- I document the first British Columbian and second Canadian record of Hooded Oriole.

*Key words:* British Columbia, *Icterus cucullatus*, Hooded Oriole.

In the early evening of 6 May 1996, I noticed a bright yellow bird leave a hummingbird feeder and fly across the back yard at 2072 Weiler Avenue in Sidney, British Columbia. It flew to another hummingbird feeder which was in a more protected position in a mountain-ash (*Sorbus* sp.) tree. Light conditions were very good; clear and sunny. My husband, Bob Wallis, and I observed the bird through 7x50 binoculars.

The bird was blackbird-sized, with a bright yellow body, shading to a very subtle orangy tint on its head. The lack of red colouration on the head precluded a male Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*). The tail was completely black, lacking the yellow edges of adult male Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). The bib was also completely black and extended from the upper breast to the beak and eye. The black wings exhibited white wing-bars. These features fit that of an adult male Hooded Oriole (*I. cucullatus*) (Robbins *et al.* 1966).

The oriole moved through two small maples (*Acer* sp.) and a sumac (*Rhus* sp.), which are in close proximity to the mountain-ash that contains the feeder, and settled for up to three minutes on the feeder.

At 07:30 on 7 May 1996, the bird was observed again by us and birder Barbara R. Begg, who was able to confirm his call. The Hooded Oriole stayed throughout the daylight hours,

when over 30 birders, including Bryan Gates, David Stirling and Bruce Whittington, observed him moving through the trees and to the feeder. The weather changed frequently from showers to sunshine. The bird was in close proximity most of the time, being viewed from a window at a distance of 15 ft. (about 5 m.). Several photographs taken helped confirm identification, but were not suitable for identification. A drawing of the bird appears in Figure 1.

Colin Knecht, President of the Vancouver Island Cage Bird Society, has given assurances that to the best of his knowledge there is no record of Hooded Orioles as cage birds. Therefore, we can assume that this sighting is not of an escaped bird.

The normal range of Hooded Oriole along the western coast of North America extends north to northern California, but it has occurred in west-central Oregon (American Ornithologists' Union 1983). The only previous accepted Canadian record occurred in 1992 at Long Point, Ontario, where it was netted, banded and photographed (Boardman 1992; Bain 1993; see also colour photograph in Anonymous 1992). The Sidney occurrence has been accepted by the British Columbia Field Ornithologists Bird Records Committee (G. S. Davidson personal communication to M. K. McNicholl 13 November 1996). It thus represents the first documented record of this species in British Columbia, and the second in Canada.

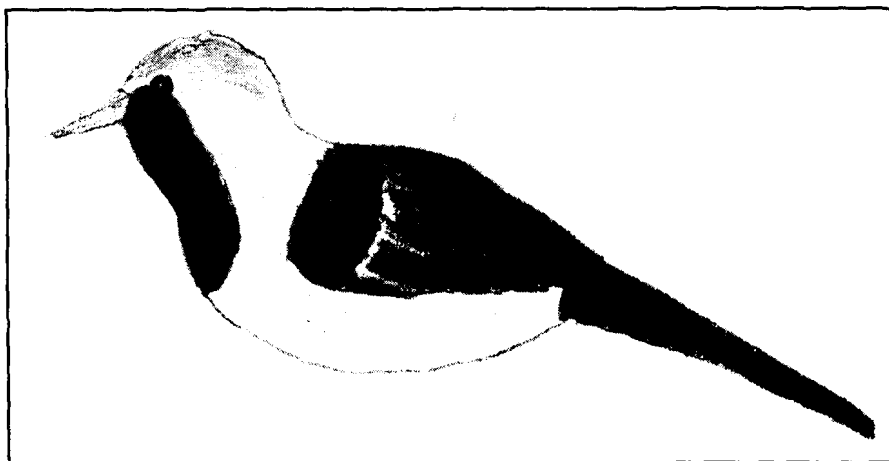


Figure 1. Drawing of male Hooded Oriole at Sidney, British Columbia, 6-7 May 1996.

[Editor's note: Subsequent to this record, there have been four more reports of possible or confirmed Hooded Orioles in British Columbia. An unconfirmed bird was reported in a yard near Mundy Park, Coquitlam on 25 May 1996 (K. Elliott. 1997. *Wandering Tattler* 21(1):8-12). It was considered "likely the same bird" as the subject of this note (J. Bowling. 1996. *National Audubon Society Field Notes* 50:321-327). Another Hooded Oriole (sex not stated) spent 19 July 1997 in a backyard at Esquimalt Lagoon (M. Bain and M. Holder. 1997. *Birders Journal* 6:159-161, 164-176). A male was reportedly observed at Blackie Spit, Crescent Beach on 19 September 1997 (M. Bain and M. Holder. 1997. *Birders Journal* 6:210-228). Much observed and much photographed was a male that appeared at a feeder in Terrace on 19 November 1997 and stayed much of the winter of 1997-1998 (Figure 2; C. Thomas and G. Thomas. 1998. *Birders Journal* 7:6-7). -M.K.M.]

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Figure 2. Male Hooded Oriole at Terrace, British Columbia, 1 February 1998.  
Photo by Jo Ann MacKenzie.