

Fourth Report of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee April 1992

by Ed Kwater, Chairman

The fourth PORC report covers all decisions made by the committee on the occurrence of rarities in Pennsylvania from May 1992 to April 1993. During this period a total of 44 records were reviewed. This is less than half the number reviewed in the equivalent period in 1991–1992 (see *Pa. Birds* 6(1):18–21). However a large batch of more than 50 records was still in circulation at the time of going to press, so these will be included in the fifth report. The general trend among Pa. birders is of a growing awareness of the need to document the occurrence of rarities in the state and this is reflected in the increasing numbers of records submitted to PORC.

Of the 44 records reviewed, no fewer than 40 (90%) were accepted. This compares very favorably with acceptance rates of 71% in the third report, 75% in the second report, and only 43% for records covered by the first report. Of the records accepted, almost half qualified for Class I status, reflecting the growing trend towards photographic documentation of rare bird sightings. However photographs should always be supported with written documentation for the sake of completeness, or with recordings where appropriate (the case of Pacific Slope Flycatcher springs to mind—see the list of non-accepted records).

This report adds several new species to the Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania. Notable among these is Barrow's Goldeneye. The identification of females of this species is fraught with difficulty bearing in mind the variation in the bill pattern of female Common Goldeneye. Despite several reports of Barrow's Goldeneye in the state by reliable observers, none had been photographed until the pair appeared at Presque Isle (Erie

Co.) in February 1992. They stayed for almost a month and were joined briefly by a second male, allowing birders a unique opportunity to study this rare species.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of 1992 was the state's first Mew Gull in Berks Co. Again this was a long-staying bird, which was relatively obliging despite being present with thousands of other gulls. Equally rare in the lower 48 states was Pennsylvania's first Ross' Gull in York Co. in October 1991. In contrast to the Mew Gull, this bird was seen by only two observers and only on three days. Despite reports of LeConte's Sparrow in 1959 and 1974, it was not until 1991 that the occurrence of this species in Pa. was confirmed when a bird was banded and photographed at Powdermill Nature Reserve (Westmoreland Co.). The final addition to the state list was the Band-tailed Pigeon found at Presque Isle (Erie Co.) in December 1992 to round off what was a memorable year for rarities. Most observers would agree, however, that the most spectacular rarity in 1992 was the Great Gray Owl in Warren Co. This bird probably attracted more attention from birders than any other rarity which ever occurred in the state.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF ACCEPTED RECORDS, BY CLASS (AOU ORDER)

CLASS I

EARED GREBE

(*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Erie Co. Three in basic plumage on Presque Isle Bay 9 November 1991. At least one bird stayed for several days (E. Kwater).

(EURASIAN) GREEN- WINGED TEAL

(*Anas crecca crecca*)

Bucks Co. A male at Peace Valley County Park 1 January to 31 March 1992 (A. Brady).

EURASIAN WIGEON

(*Anas penelope*)

Erie Co. A male in definitive basic plumage, Presque Isle SP 16 October 1991 (J. McWilliams). A male in alternate 1 plumage, Presque Isle SP 29 March 1992 (E. Kwater, J. McWilliams).

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE

(*Bucephala islandica*)

Erie Co. A pair on Presque Isle Bay 20 February to 17 March 1992 were joined by a second male on 26 February (J. McWilliams). This is the first fully documented and confirmed record for Pennsylvania.

GYRFALCON

(*Falco rusticolus*)

Erie Co. A gray-morph immature was present at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP from 10–11 October 1991 (J. McWilliams). During this time it consorted with a Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*) allowing comparative photographs to be taken.

SANDHILL CRANE

(*Grus canadensis*)

Montgomery Co. An adult at Green Lane Reservoir 12–13 October 1991 (Kevin Crilly).

AMERICAN AVOCET

(*Recurvirostra americana*)

Erie Co. A male at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 18 August 1991 (D. Darney).

Montgomery Co. A male at Green Lane Reservoir 3–9 November 1991 (R. Wiltraut).

Lehigh Co. A male at Schantz Road near Allentown 11–17 November 1991 (R. Wiltraut).

WILLET

(*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

Erie Co. One at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 7 July 1991 (J. McWilliams).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

(*Limosa haemastica*)

Lehigh Co. A juvenile at Schantz Road near Allentown 22 October 1991 (R. Wiltraut).

Erie Co. A bird in basic plumage at Presque Isle SP 9 November 1991 (J. McWilliams).

MARBLED GODWIT

(*Limosa fedoa*)

Erie Co. One at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 7 July 1991 associated with a Willet (J. McWilliams).

B U F F - B R E A S T E D SANDPIPER

(*Tryngites subruficollis*)

Mercer Co. One juvenile at Shenango Reservoir 2 September 1991 (J. McWilliams).

PARASITIC JAEGER

(*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

Erie Co. A juvenile at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 2 November 1991 (J. McWilliams).

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL

(*Larus ridibundus*)

Lancaster Co. One in basic 1 plumage at Conowingo Pond on the Susquehanna River 22-23 February 1992 (R. Schutsky, E. Witmer).

MEW GULL

(*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*)

Berks Co. A bird in definitive basic plumage was first located at Lake Ontelaunee on 2 January 1992 by D. Rich, H. Morrin, and J. Heller. It subsequently moved to Blue Marsh Lake on 3 January and was seen by numerous observers almost daily for the next few weeks (no final date known). This was a first record for Pennsylvania and proved to be of the nominate European race *L. c. canus* (Kwater 1992).

ROSS' GULL

(*Rhodostethia rosea*)

York Co. An immature bird in basic 2 plumage was observed

and videotaped at Lake Marburg in Codorus SP on 9 October 1991. It was seen again on 10 October and briefly on 13 October. This was the first record for Pennsylvania and one of very few ever seen in eastern North America (K. Lippy).

GREAT GRAY OWL

(*Strix nebulosa*)

Warren Co. A bird was discovered on the grounds of the United Refining Co. in Warren on 28 January 1992. It subsequently moved to a stretch of railroad along the Allegheny River below the Route 6 by-pass and was seen daily by hundreds of observers until 13 February then intermittently till 27 March. Only the second twentieth century record (and the first live one) for Pennsylvania (T. Grisez, W. Laubscher).

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD

(*Selasphorus rufus*)

Allegheny Co. An adult male came to a feeder in Wexford beginning on or around 8 November 1991 and remained for at least two weeks although its departure date is uncertain (J. Dunn, M. Fialkovitch).

LECONTE'S SPARROW

(*Ammodramus leconteii*)

Westmoreland Co. A juvenile was banded at Powdermill Nature Reserve on 20 October 1991. First confirmed record for Pennsylvania (Robert Mulvihill, Robert Leberman).

CLASS II

ROSS' GOOSE

(*Chen rossii*)

Lancaster Co. An adult at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area 8 March 1992. Third record for Pennsylvania (J. Heller, R. Miller).

PARASITIC JAEGER

(*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

Erie Co. A juvenile at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 5 October 1991 (E. Kwater, J. McWilliams).

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD

(*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

Lancaster Co. At least one male near Quarryville 15 December 1991 (C. Hicks, R. Miller).

CLASS III

WHITE IBIS

(*Eudocimus albus*)

Mercer Co. An adult on Spring Road near Grove City 5 May 1991 (S. McCarl).

EURASIAN WIGEON

(*Anas penelope*)

Erie Co. An adult male at Presque Isle SP 9 November 1991 (E. Kwater).

HARLEQUIN DUCK

(*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

Warren Co. Three females on the Allegheny River 5 miles west of Warren 11 February 1967 (H. Johnson, T. Grisez). One co-authored account submitted, hence Class III.

BLACK VULTURE

(*Coragyps atratus*)

Clinton Co. A bird at Beech Creek on 22 December 1991 was the first known record for Clinton Co. (P. and G. Schwalbe).

SANDHILL CRANE

(*Grus canadensis*)

Dauphin Co. One at Haldeman's Island 6 March 1991 (D. Brauning).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

(*Limosa haemastica*)

Lehigh Co. An adult in pre-basic molt at Schantz Road near

Allentown 11 November 1991. First known Lehigh Co. record (R. Wiltraut).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER
(*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)
Montgomery Co. A juvenile at Green Lane Reservoir from 4–15 November 1991 (R. Wiltraut).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE
(*Phalaropus tricolor*)
Mercer Co. A bird at Shenango Reservoir 4 August 1991 (M. Fialkovitch). Although not a state rarity this species is included here because of its relative rarity in western Pennsylvania.

PARASITIC JAEGER
(*Stercorarius parasiticus*)
Erie Co. One at Gull Point, Presque Isle SP 3 November 1991 (J. McWilliams).

FRANKLIN'S GULL
(*Larus pipixcan*)
Luzerne Co. A bird in alternate definitive plumage at Harvey's Lake 17 April 1992. First county record (J. Skinner).

BAND-TAILED PIGEON
(*Columba fasciata*)
Erie Co. A bird was observed along Marina Drive, Presque Isle SP 12 December 1992. First state record (D. Snyder).

G R E A T C R E S T E D FLYCATCHER
(*Myiarchus crinitus*)
Berks Co. A bird at Blue Marsh Lake 1–6 January 1992 is included here because of the unseasonal nature of the sighting (D. Kendall).

SHARP-TAILED SPARROW
(*Ammodramus caudacutus*)
Lancaster Co. At least 12 and perhaps as many as 20 individuals on small islands in the Susquehanna River at Bainbridge 6 October 1991 (S. Santner).

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD
(*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)
Cumberland Co. A male at Camp Hill 26 October 1991 (D.

Colyer).

List of Records Not Accepted

Pacific/Arctic Loon—1 December 1991, Nockamixon Lake, Bucks Co. Description did not rule out Red-throated or Common loons.

Brown Pelican—22 July 1991, Conneaut Harbor, Ohio. Bird was originally seen in Pa. but no details received. Only documentation was of the bird's occurrence in Ohio. This record was not accepted by the Ohio Records Committee.

Black-legged Kittiwake—4 November 1991, Green Lane Reservoir, Montgomery Co. Insufficient details submitted.

Pacific Slope Flycatcher—15 December 1985, Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, Lancaster Co. No recording of the (diagnostic) call was made.

Loggerhead Shrike—4 November 1990, Donegal Lake, Westmoreland Co. Details submitted strongly suggest Northern Shrike.

(O r e g o n) D a r k - e y e d Junco—19 January 1992, Grove City, Mercer Co. Description did not rule out the Dark-eyed race conclusively.

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