

THIRTEENTH REPORT of the PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

February 2005

Matt Sharp and Nick Pulcinella for the Committee

This report covers 99 records of 65 species submitted to the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (hereafter PORC or the Committee). The 59 records accepted, of 43 species, represent an acceptance rate of 59%. Highlights include the first record for California Gull, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Cave Swallow; second record for Pink-footed Goose; and third records for White-winged Dove and Green-tailed Towhee. The addition of the three new records brings the state total to 398 species (Pulcinella 2000).

The Committee received reports from 33 counties. The top seven counties reporting were Erie (19), Bucks (18), Northampton (8), Berks (4), Crawford (4), McKean (4) and Montgomery (4). PORC requests reports of any species on the Review List as well as any species not previously accepted for Pennsylvania. The Committee encourages observers to document their sightings with photographs, videos or sound recordings when possible. The Committee also emphasizes that the primary point of any documentation of a rare bird should be a detailed written description. At times, the committee receives photographs that do not adequately depict the field marks needed to clinch the identification, whereas supporting written documentation may add the missing information. On the other hand the Committee has also received written descriptions, apparently made up to a month after the sighting. While we recognize that busy lives do not always provide the spare-time for such luxuries as writing descriptions of reviewed species, in cases where there is a significant time-lapse between observation and description, anything more than several hours, it is important to include notes or sketches made in the field at the time of the observation. Otherwise there will be no objective material for the Committee to evaluate, and properly identified birds will be rejected on nothing more than a technicality.

For tips and guidelines on documenting rare birds, observers

are encouraged to consult the Committee's web pages at <http://www.pabirds.org>, Dittman and Lasley 1992, Hanisek and Lehman 1997, and PORC 2000.

Documentation can be submitted to Nick Pulcinella, PORC Secretary, 613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380.

Committee News:

The current members of the Committee include Matt Sharp (chair), Dan Heathcote (treasurer), Paul Guris, Eric Witmer, Jerry Stanley, Bob Leberman and Rick Wiltraut. Nick Pulcinella is the non-voting secretary. Recent members who voted on some records in this report include Paul Hess and George Armistead.

At the Committee's last meeting on October 11, 2003 several changes were made to the Review List. Removed from the list were: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Least Tern and brewer's Blackbird. Additions to the list: Yellow-crowned Night Heron (with no exemptions), sharp-tailed sparrow species. Changes in county exemptions; Little Gull – add Lancaster; Blue Grosbeak – add Berks; Summer Tanager – remove Greene. Changes in sex exemptions; Eurasian Wigeon – remove male only.

The Committee has a presence on the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology web site at www.pabirds.org where PORC's pages include the Official State List, the Review List of species requiring documentation, tips for improving documentation of rarities, and a documentation form that can be downloaded. The site also contains information about the functions of the Committee as well as a photo gallery of rarities found in Pennsylvania.

Classification of Records:

Class I: An accepted record based on an existing identifiable specimen, a diagnostic photograph or a diagnostic recording. Abbreviations are (p) photograph submitted, (r) sound recording, (a) audiotape, (v) videotape, (s) specimen.

Class II: An accepted sight record documented independently by two or more observers.

Class III: An accepted sight record documented by one observer.

Format of this Report:

The records are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (AOU 1998).

The number in parentheses after the species name represents the number of accepted records, including those in this report, since the establishment of PORC in 1989.

A + after the number signifies that there are accepted records prior to the formation of PORC.

Each record includes the locality and county and date(s) when known. In many cases, dates are taken from the quarterly reports published in *Pennsylvania Birds*.

Enclosed in parentheses following the date are the initials of known observers and those who submitted documentation.

Following the list of observers is the record's classification and the PORC record number. This is followed by the Committee's vote tally for each record.

All photographs, video and sound recordings are currently being held with the Secretary until a permanent location is established.

An * after a species name indicates that the species is no longer on the PORC review list.

Abbreviations: **CBC** = Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** = and others, **m.obs.** = multiple observers; **NAB** = North American Birds; **NAMC** = North America Migration Count, **PB** = Pennsylvania Birds; **PISP** = Presque Isle State Park; **Res.** = Reservoir; **S.P.** = State Park; **Tw.p.** = Township

ACCEPTED SPECIES

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) (2)

Buckingham Twp. *Bucks*, 27 January-2 February 2002. (DF(v), AM(v), AB(p) m.obs.; Class I; 108-01-2002). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 16:25. This is the second accepted record for Pennsylvania.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) (8+)

A female in Richmond Twp. *Crawford*, 18 October 2001. (BS(p); Class I; 149-01-2001). 7/0. Photograph published NAB 56:124. PISP, *Erie* 2 February 2002. (MF, BM, JM, DF; Class I; 149-01-2002). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 16:25.



Plate 1. Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). A female in Richmond Twp. *Crawford*, 18 October 2001 (Bob Scribner).

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) (5+)

A female present on the Delaware River near New Hope, *Bucks*, 19 January-11 March 2001. (BH, AM (v); Class I; 155-01-2001). 7/0. This bird was seen repeatedly over its course of stay traveling with a flock of about 60 Common Goldeneyes.

Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) (2+)

One at PISP, *Erie*, 30 November-1 December 2002. (JM (p), BC (p); Class I; 065-01-2002). 7/0. This bird came flying in over Lake Erie during Jerry McWilliams waterbird count. The bird was seen again the following day feeding with gulls. Photograph published in PB 16:183.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) (5+)

Two at Marsh Creek S.P., *Chester*, 3 October 2001. (JMa, AG, NP, m.obs.; Class III; 068-01-2001). 7/0. This was a first county record. Photograph published in PB 15:236. One at Green Lane Res., *Montgomery*, 4 November 2001-8 January 2002.

(GFra, KC, m.obs.; Class III; 068-02-2001). 7/0. This species winters in small numbers along the lower Delaware River from s. Bucks to the Delaware state line. It seems to be slowly spreading its fall and winter range north and west from this core area.

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) (2+)

One observed on a horse farm in Hebron Twp., *Potter*, 28 October 2001. (GW; Class III; 089-01-2001). 7/0.

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) (9+)

One immature photographed at Gretna Glen Camp, *Lebanon*, 8-14 July 2001. (DW (p); Class 01; 093-02-2001). 7/0. Photographed published in PB 15:171.



Plate 2. White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*). An immature photographed at Gretna Glen Camp, *Lebanon*, 12 July 2001. (David Wheeler). (check PA Birds 15/171 to see which photo was published)

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (13+)

One adult at Buzzard Swamp, *Forest*, 11 May 2002. (FM; Class III; 095-01-2002). 7/0. An adult at Tullytown, *Bucks* 17 May 2002. (DF(v); Class I; 095-02-2002). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 16:98. One at Green Lane Res., *Montgomery*, 14 September 2002. (GF; Class III; 095-03-2002). 6/1. Photograph published in PB 16:184. This bird was noted to be an adult in "summer plumage". The observer was diligent in ruling out the similar White-faced Ibis by noting the bird had a dark eye and the leg color was olive-gray.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) (5+)

One juvenile at Mosiertown, *Crawford*, 12-31 August 2001. (MM (p), m.obs., Class I, 099-01-2001). 7/0. One at Littlestown, *Adams*, 19 August-3 September 2001. (BM (p), AG (p), m.obs.; Class I; 099-02-2001). 7/0. Photograph published in NAB 56:1 cover, PB 15:3 cover. Both of these birds fall into the traditional

late-summer, early-fall occurrence pattern for this species in Pennsylvania.



Plate 3. Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*). An adult in Littlestown, *Adams*, 24 August 2001 (Al Guarente)

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) (13+).

One at Peace Valley Park, *Bucks*, 2 June 2001. (IB; Class III; 171-01-2002). 7/0. One at the Blue Marsh Gamelands, *Berks*, 24 May 2001. (KK; Class III; 171-04-2001). 7/0. This species has become a regular spring visitor and these two records fit nicely into the mid-May early June pattern.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). (2+).

One at Little Gap Hawk Lookout, *Northampton*, 15 September 2001. (MS, BS; Class II; 186-01-2001). 6/1 after two rounds.

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolis*) (5+)

A dark-morph probable first-year at PISP, *Erie*, 27 January-2 February 2001. (DC, RS m.obs.; Class II; 200-01-2001). 6/1. A white-morph also at PISP, *Erie*, 31 March-2 April 2001. (BC; PK, m.obs.; Class II; 200-02-2001). 7/0.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) (2+)

One flushed several times from a patch of sedges in Eldred, *McKean*, 6 October 2002. (BC, DW; Class III; 231-01-2002). 7/0. The date is consistent with other reports of this species in Pennsylvania. The peak of its fall migration passage in the state is probably during the first few weeks of October but more reports of this secretive species are needed to verify this.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) (8+)

One photographed on the Conejohela Flats, Washington Boro, *Lancaster*, 31 May 2002. (TA(p), BSch; Class I; 261-01-2002). 7/0.



Plate 4. Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Conejohela Flats, Washington Boro, Lancaster, 31 May 2002 (Tom Amico).

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) (13+)

A juvenile seen at Allegheny Res., Warren, 3 September 2002. (JF; Class III; 293-02-2002). 7/0. The description of the black underwing ruled out the similar Black-tailed Godwit for which there is one Pennsylvania record.

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) (11+)

One bird seen at PISP, Erie, 28 April 2002. (JM(p), BC; Class I; 295-01-2002). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 16:99. This bird was seen and heard as the observers were arriving at Gull Point to conduct a count for the International Shorebird Survey. The descriptions ruled out all other godwit species.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper * (*Tryngites subruficollis*) (6)

One at Green Lane Res., Montgomery, 7 September 2001. (DF(v); Class I; 320-01-2001). 7/0. Photograph published PB 15:174. One at Pine Run, Bucks, 9-20 September 2001. (DF(v), m.obs.; Class I; 320-02-2001). 7/0. Reports of this species after 2003 will no longer be reviewed.

Red-necked Phalarope * (*Phalaropus lobatus*) (14+)

A juvenile at Imperial, Allegheny, 26-27 August 2002. (MF; Class III; 330-02-2002). 7/0. Reports of this species after 2003 will no longer be reviewed.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) (7+)

One found sitting on one of sand islands at PISP, Erie, 18 November 2001. (JM; Class III; 332-01-2001). 5/1. One observed flying along the shoreline of Lake Erie at PISP, Erie, 1 January 2002. (JM; class III; 332-01-2002). 6/1. The mid-November to late December period at PISP has contributed the majority of non-

storm related Pomarine Jaeger reports for Pennsylvania.

Jaeger species (*Stercorarius* species) (10+)

One at PISP, Erie, 8 October 2001. (JM; Class III; 332a-01-2001). 6/1. Another seen at a distance at PISP, Erie, 24 December 2001. (JM; Class III; 332a-02-2001). 6/0. Another at PISP, Erie, 28 December 2001. (JM; Class III; 332a-03-2001). 6/1. All three birds were seen offshore Lake Erie but at such a distance that determination to specific species could not be made.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) (8+)

Three adults at Lake Somerset, Somerset, 21-22 April 2001. (JP, LP; Class III; 338-01-2001). 6/1.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) (13+)

One at Martin's Creek PP&L Flyash Basin, Northampton, 7 April 2001. (RW; Class III; 339-02-2001). This bird was in near alternate plumage and seen in direct comparison with Bonaparte's Gulls.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (1)

One at PISP, Erie, 18-23 November 2002. (BC(p), DW, JM(p); Class I; 346-01-2002). 7/0. This bird was photographed and meticulously described in direct comparison with Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. Photograph published in PB 16:147-149. This is a first state record.

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) (21)

One adult on the Delaware River in Tullytown, Bucks, 23 February 2002. (MS; Class III; 348-01-2002). 5/1 with one member abstaining. The majority of accepted records of this species have come from this location

or from PISP, Erie. This bird was observed in direct comparison to adult Iceland and Herring gulls. Until further field identification characteristics are worked out in separating non-adults of this species from non-adult Iceland Gulls, PORC will no longer review reports of this species unless they are adult birds.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) (9+)

An immature on the Conejohela Flats, Washington Boro, Lancaster, 22 September 2002. (EW, TG, et al; Class II; 360-01-2002). 7/0. This bird was studied both flying and swimming in direct comparison with Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls while the observers were "chumming old bread" to attract gulls on the Susquehanna River.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) (4)

One in Fairview, Erie, 25 November 2001-14 April 2002. (JM(p), DF(v) m.obs; Class I; 409a-01-2001; 409a-01-2002). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 15:237. This long-staying bird was observed intermittently on the dates provided and favored a small area making it easily available to birders. It was noted mostly perched on utility wires or at a nearby feeding station. This species continues to expand north to Pennsylvania from its stronghold in the southern states and more reports are expected.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) (3)

This bird was especially accommodating as it visited a feeder in New Castle, Lawrence, 11-12 June 2001. (CG, BD; Class I; 413-01-2001). 7/0. Photograph published PB15:95. This is the third state record.

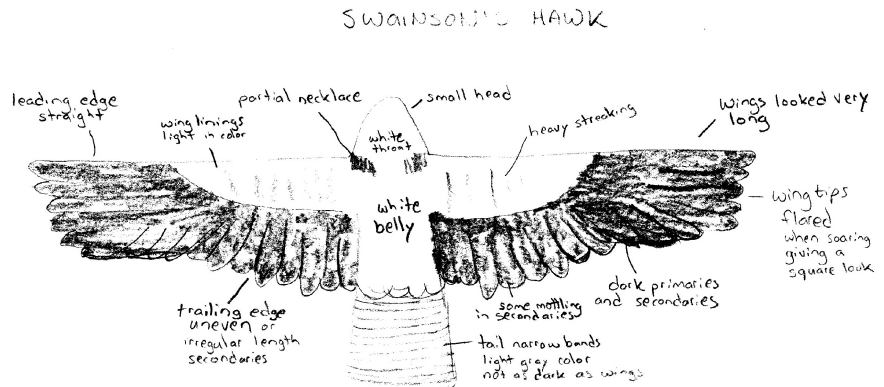


Plate 5. Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). Sketch of bird observed at Little Gap Hawk Lookout, Northampton, 15 September 2001 (Michael Schall).

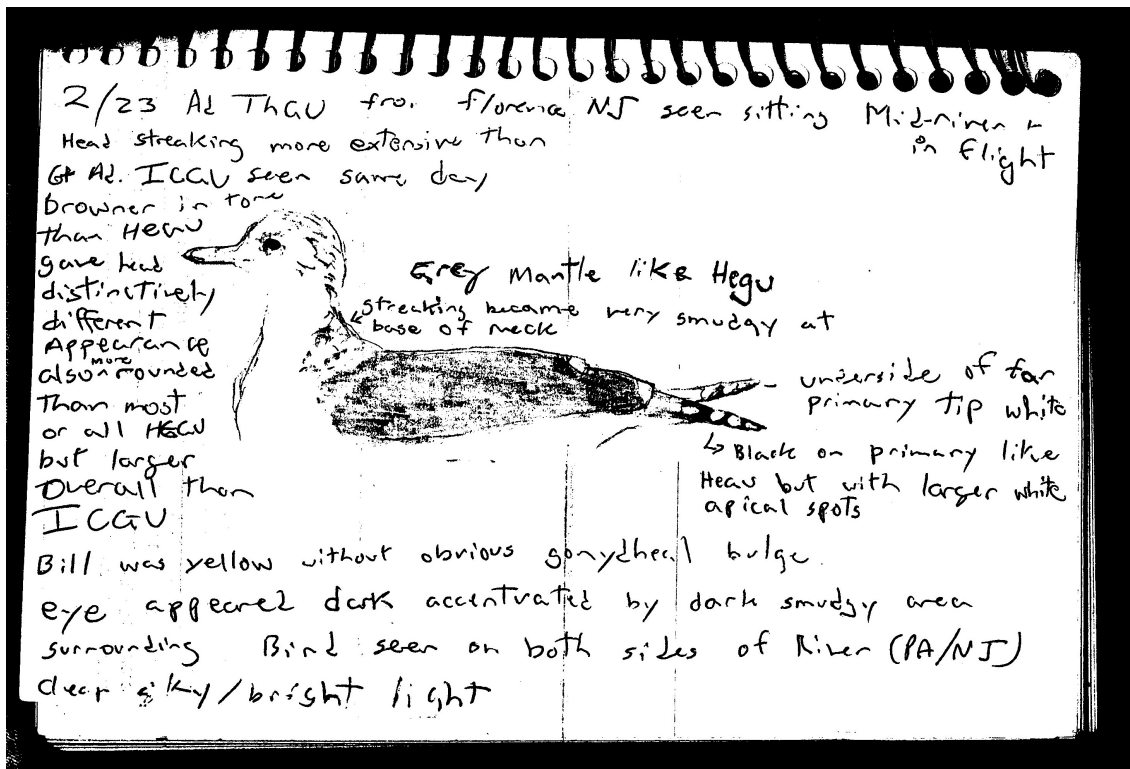


Plate 6. Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*). Field notes of adult on the Delaware River in Tullytown, Bucks, 23 February 2002 (Matt Sharp).

SPECIES: IMMATURE SABINE'S GULL

WHERE: CONEJOHELA FLATS, LANCASTER CO. PA.

WHEN: SEPTEMBER 22, 2002

OBSERVERS: TOM GARNER, ERILWITNER, BRUCE CARL, JERRY BOOK

NOTES: VIEWED FOR ABOUT AN HOUR UNDER VERY FAVORABLE
 CONDITIONS THROUGH A KOWA TS824 20x-60x SCOPE
 AND SWAROVSKI 8.5x42 EL BINOCULARS

SIZE: SWIMMING IN WATER IN DIRECT COMPARISON WITH
 A BONAPARTE'S AND RING-BILLED GULLS, THE SABINE'S
 WAS MUCH SMALLER THAN THE RING-BILLED'S AND
 ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS BONAPARTE'S.

DESCRIPTION: BILL SMALL AND BLACK. FACE AND
 UNDERPARTS WHITE. SIDES OF FACE, CROWN,
 NAPE, AND UPPERPARTS DUNKY BROWN WITH
 NOTICEABLE PALER FEATHER EDGINGS ON WINGS
 AND BACK GIVING A "SCALLOPED" APPEARANCE.
 TAIL WAS WHITE AND NOTICEABLY FORKED WITH
 BLACK BAND AT END. WING PATTERN IN
 FLIGHT VERY BOLD AND OBVIOUS AS BELOW -



NOTE: THREE OF THE
 OBSERVERS INCLUDING
 MYSELF HAVE PREVIOUSLY
 SEEN IMM. SABINE'S GULL
 AS DOCUMENTED BY PHOTOS
 FROM THE FLATS IN THE 90'S.

SUBMITTED 9/29/2002
 BY TOM GARNER

Plate 7. Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*). Written documentation submitted for immature on the Conejohela Flats, Washington Boro, Lancaster, 22 September 2002 (Tom Garner).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) (7+)

One near Easton, *Northampton*, 9-17 November 2001. (AK, DD(p), SW(p) m.obs.; Class I; 495-01-2001). 7/0. Photograph published in PB 15:235. This bird was trapped and banded by Scott Weidensaul on 10 November and identified as a hatching-year female. Interestingly, this bird had already replaced its rectrices with adult feathers, which initially caused a bit of confusion as to age. This is one of a growing number of late fall reports of this species for the state.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) (1)

This amazing individual flew past the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch, *Bedford*, 20 October 2002. (CT, LS, TK, JK, JP, m.obs.; Class II; 504-01-2002). 6/1. Needless to say, the 15 observers at the hawkwatch that day were astonished by this fly-by. The committee is grateful that five of the observers submitted written descriptions. This is a first state record.



Plate 8. Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picooides arcticus*) One male at the Pocono Environmental Education Center, *Pike*, 3 March 2001 (Mark McConaughy).

Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picooides arcticus*) (2+)

One male at the Pocono Environmental Education Center, *Pike*, 6 March-29 April 2001. (KD, MF, WL(p), MM (p), NP(p), PS, RW(p), m.obs.; Class I; 521-01-2001) 7/0. Photograph published NAB 55:383, PB 15:97. This long-staying individual was seen by hundreds of birders from several states as it meticulously in a stand of Red Pines allowing close approach. This was the first confirmed record in twenty years.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (14+)

One observed at Nockamixon S.P.,

Bucks, 4 October 2001. (BE; Class III; 557-01-2001). 7/0. The date falls nicely into the mid-September to mid-October time frame for this species in Pennsylvania.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) (1)

One at *Huntsdale, Cumberland*, 19 November 2002. (DS; Class III; 576-01-2002). 7/0. This bird was observed from distances as close as 15 feet for about fifteen minutes as it fed over a small pond at a fish hatchery during a sleet storm. This species has occurred in nearby states within this same time frame and has been overdue to occur in Pennsylvania. This is a first state record.

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) (11+)

One at PISP, *Erie*, 1 June 2002. (GM; Class III; 625-01-2002). 7/0. One seen and heard at close range in West Twp., *Huntingdon*, 26-27 May 2002; (GG, DK, TK; Class III; 625-02-2002). 6/1.

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) (1+)

One videoed at Core Creek County Park, *Bucks*, 13 May 2001. (AM, DF(v); m.obs., Class I; 654a-02-2001). 7/0 after two rounds. This was an amazing video showing the bird well as it save and also gave call notes. During first-round voting a majority felt that the record was probably good but because field identification of Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush can be complicated a review by an outside expert was requested. Michael O'Brien who was able to obtain sonograms from the video, which matched those of Bicknell's Thrush, reviewed the record. There was unanimous acceptance on second-round voting.

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) (9+)

One at PISP, *Erie*, 10-17 November 2001. (DDo; JM(p), m.obs.; Class I; 694-01-2001). 7/0. Photograph published NAB 56:52, PB 15:238. This bird was found by visiting Ohio birders while it fed on berries with a flock of Cedar Waxwings.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) (2+)

One at PISP, *Erie*, 8 September 2001. (JH, BC, DW, MK; RFri, KCo; Class II; 737-01-2001). 6/1 after two rounds.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica*

kirtlandii) (6+)

One seen and heard in a small pine plantation at the Piney Tract, *Clarion*, 12 May 2001. (JF; Class III; 746-01-2001). 6/1. This is the third accepted spring record.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) (8+)

One present at Bushy Run Battlefield Park, *Westmoreland*, 8-18 May 2001. (MM(v); Class I; 756-01-2001). 7/0.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) (2)

One present at feeders near Center, *Juniata*, 10 November-1 December 2002. (TP; JF(p), MM(p), MO(p) Matt Osie m.obs.; Class I; 799-01-2002). 7/0. A great find by Toby Petersheim, many enjoyed this cooperative bird. Photograph published PB 16:154. Third state record.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) (6+)

One present at Benjamin Rush S.P., *Philadelphia*, 2 February-6 March 2002. (JD(p), DF(v), NP(p) m.obs. Class I; 820-01-2002). 7/0.

LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) (6+)

One at Bullis Mill Swamp, *McKean*, 5 October 2002. (JF; Class III; 829-01-2002). 7/0.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) (10)

Three birds seen together at close range at PISP, *Erie*, 5 October 2001. (JM(p); Class I; 830a-04-2001). 7/0.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) (6+)

One at Moorestown, *Northampton*, 22-24 December 2001. (DD; AK; Class III; 839-02-2001). 6/1. This bird was first found by Dave DeReamus on the Wild Creek-Penn Forest CBC and then seen again two days later by Arlene Koch.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) (4+)

One seen and heard near Mammoth, *Westmoreland*, 28-29 April 2001. (DL; MM(v); Class I; 858-01-2001). 7/0. One found during the NAMC near Crabtree, *Westmoreland*, 12 May 2001. (MM(v); Class I; 858-02-2001). 7/0.

Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*) (2+) Three present at Mansfield, *Tioga*, 26 January 2002 last date unknown. (MM(v), DF(v); Class I; 879-01-2002). 7/0.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification questionable (Votes are listed as for/against/abstain. A vote of 6/1 or 7/0 is required for acceptance.)

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). One at Moraine S.P., *Butler*, 12 April 2001. Class IV-A; 002a-01-2001. 0/7.

This bird was seen from considerable distance. At long range the subtle field marks separating non-adult plumaged loons are hard to detect and in this case many were not described. Size is a very difficult feature to judge on a solitary bird at 300 yards and the only feature mentioned that would positively identify the bird was the "chinstrap" a mark that can be approximated by shadow or displaced feathers, or both.

Band-rumped Storm-petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*). One found on the Lake Erie Shore, *Erie*, 24 February 1998. Class IV-B; 052-01-1998. 3/1 after three rounds.

One of the more remarkable reports the committee has dealt with. After a 3rd round of voting and the opinion of a seabird expert not on the PA Committee, the report was placed in class IV-B. The committee never received any measurements of the specimen, only the expert opinion that the bird was a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel. It is important that the committee not let an outside expert determine its opinion without objective data. As of September 22, 2003, the specimen was lost, so measurements is now impossible. Furthermore, one committee member brought up the possibility that this bird was never alive in Pennsylvania and could have been transported dead aboard an ocean-going vessel. Unfortunately, the record will remain in a state of limbo indefinitely.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). One in Allentown, *Lehigh*, 28 May 2002. Class IV-A; 168-01-2002. 2/5.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*). One seen along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, *Fulton*, 12 August 2001. Class IV-A; 171-05-2001. 2/5.

White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). One seen passing North

Lookout, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, *Berks*, 9 October 1986. Class IV-C; 173-01-1986. 0/7 after two rounds. This report began with the discovery, in a drawer at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, a photograph of a large eagle-like bird labeled as White-tailed Eagle taken at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. The Committee was able, with the assistance of personnel from Hawk Mountain, to accumulate additional information surrounding the sighting. This information included personal comments from an eyewitness, a copy of a notation from the *Hawk Mountain News* Number 67/May 1987 and an opinion rendered at the time from Kenneth Parkes then Senior Curator of Birds at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. The Committee agreed that the documentation be sent to current raptor experts, Jerry Liguori and William Clark for additional opinions. Both authorities agreed that the photo was a juvenile Bald Eagle based largely on the presence of six emarginated primaries, which is characteristic of Bald Eagle. White-tailed Eagle has seven. The tail was also considered too long for White-tailed Eagle. Liguori also submitted several photographs of similar shaped Bald Eagles.



Plate 9. Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). A juvenile at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, *Berks*, 9 October 1986 (Photographer unknown). Originally identified as a White-tailed Eagle.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). One seen at Second Mountain Hawkwatch, *Lebanon*, 13 October 2002. Class IV-B; 186-01-2002. 2/5.

Identifying migrating hawks is as much art as science. In this case the committee's most experienced hawk watcher felt the description was quite accurate in terms of shape and size or "jizz", one of the most important criteria in raptor identification. Unfortunately the art of raptor identification is often lost when translated into a written description. The perception of subtle

differences in size and shape, an ability that is almost second-nature to veteran hawk watchers, is easily lost on those who have not spent as much time on the ridges and elsewhere. For the purposes of documentation, subtle distinctions in shape or size need to be further supported by plumage details, or something that is more readily assessable.

Red-tailed Hawk (Krider's) (*Buteo jamaicensis*). One at Stone Mountain, *Huntingdon*, 21 October 2002. Class IV-A; 190a-01-2002. 4/3 after two rounds.

The committee was unanimous in its opinion that this was a superbly written and accurate description. The bird in question was probably correctly identified, but not beyond reasonable doubt. The doubt here comes mainly from the fact that Red-tailed Hawk is such a highly variable bird, one that not only shows geographic variation but which also occurs in a variety of morphs and is relatively frequently seen with plumage anomalies such as leucism and partial albinism which can be symmetrical. For a form with no pattern of vagrancy, which is part of a species as taxonomically complex as Red-tailed Hawk, the committee will most likely need some physical evidence. This excellent description does provide a very compelling reason to look for this mid-western form at hawk watches in the future.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*). One at Asbury Hill, *Erie*, 19 May 2002. Class IV-A; 191-01-2002. 1/6. One in Revere, *Bucks*, 8 November 2002. Class IV-A; 191-02-2002. 0/7.

For a species as unprecedented as this the committee took an expected conservative stance on both these reports. Neither were detailed enough to rule out all the possibilities. In one case the description seemed to have been written over a month after the sighting, and while it seemed very accurate to what was seen in the field, a month is more than enough time for the mind to confirm what the observer wants to believe the y saw.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*). One at the Mouth of Conawago Creek, *York*, 15 August 2002. Class IV-A; 258-01-2002. 3/4. This description lacked several key elements the committee felt necessary for acceptance. There was no description of the overall size and

build of the bird, or a direct comparison to another species such as Killdeer which was also present. Finally there is no description of the rear third of the bird. For a species as rare as Wilson's Plover, a description of the whole bird is needed.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*). One at Conneaut Marsh, Crawford, 17 November 2002. Class IV-A; 331-01-2002. ¾ after two rounds.

A brief observation of birds mainly in flight that included details inconsistent with Red Phalarope.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). One at Lake Somerset, Somerset, 1 April 2001. Class IV-B; 337-01-2001. 4/2 after two rounds.

Even those who accepted the report were concerned with the sparseness of the details. The notes provided seemed like field notes which are excellent supporting material but need to be accompanied by a formal description in order to meet the standards of documentation the Committee wishes to maintain for the permanent records of the state's avifauna.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*). Three at Beltzville Lake, Carbon, 17 December 2000. Class IV-B; 338-01-2000. 1/6.

After 2 rounds of review the committee was nearly unanimous in their comments that there were simply not enough details provided in either the written descriptions or the video to confidently assess the identity of the birds in question.

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*). One at Tullytown, Bucks, 13 January 2001. Class IV-A; 348-01-2001. 1/5 after two rounds with one member abstaining. One at Peace Valley Park, Bucks, 3 March 2002. Class IV-B; 348-02-2002. 2/5. One at Nockamixon S.P., Bucks, 31 March 2001. Class IV-B; 348-08-2001. 0/6/ with one member abstaining.

The evolutionary history, and taxonomic placement of this species has been debated for a long time. Currently it is considered a distinct species by the AOU. This placement is in question and it has been suggested that it is rather a subspecies of Iceland Gull. Complicating this further is uncertainty regarding the treatment of the North American race of Iceland Gull, *Larus glaucooides kumlieni* known as Kumlien's Gull.

This race has even been considered a species of its' own, but more troubling is the possibility that Kumlien's Gull is derived from intergradation between Thayer's and nominate Iceland Gull. At this point the range of variation in young birds of both gulls has not been defined though it is clear that Thayer's tends to be darker. In light of the taxonomic questions and the unknown extent of variation in young birds the committee does not believe it can confidently assess documentation of birds under four years of age. Though not able to definitively judge reports of apparent Thayer's Gull the committee encourages observers to submit documentation of the species to be archived.

Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*). One at Green Lane Res., Montgomery, 23 May 2001. Class IV-A; 367-01-2001. 3/4.

A brief sighting of a bird seen only in flight. For a species so rare away from the coast and with only three previous reports in the state a more detailed study, if not a photo, is needed. The fact that one of the previous reports is a specimen does make this frustrating as it indicates the possibility of the species appearing again. Most species of tern complete the molt to "breeding" plumage in the south before migrating so the bird described was almost certainly a bird in either its first or second summer plumage, approximately 11 or 22 months old. Forster's, Common, Arctic as well as Roseate Tern would show the combination of dark outer primaries (to varying degrees) and a black bill with some red at the base at this age. To be positive it would be necessary to see the bird perched and assess the tail extension past the wings, and the leg length.

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*). One at Shenango Res., Mercer, 12 August 2001. Class IV-A; 372-02-2001. 1/5 after two rounds.

Much of the identification rested on the apparent size of the bird with a Killdeer used as a comparison species. Given the great difference in build this may have been misleading. The average lengths given in most field guides can be misleading when used to compare the sizes of birds, a character more related to mass than length. In terms of mass a Least Tern is more comparable to a *Calidris* sandpiper than a Killdeer since most of a tern's length

consists of feathers.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*). One at Shady Grove, Franklin, 9 May - 15 September 2001. Class IV-A; 409a-02-2002. 1/6.

This bird was obviously a *Streptopelia* dove but the photograph provided did not show the undertail, undertail coverts, or primaries. Without a description or view of these parts it was simply not possible to identify the bird positively since all the field marks visible are shared by Ringed Turtle-Dove, not to mention a hybrid between the two species. Hybrids are being found with increasing frequency in areas where both species are found, and considering that both species are still sold as pets, the possibility of a hybrid is real.

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*). One in Jackson Twp., Tioga, 13 August 2000. Class IV-A; 489-01-2000. 3/4.

A fascinating report which stumped most members and caused the committee to seek an outside opinion. This opinion revealed that young hummingbirds replace tail feathers with adult-type feathers if they are lost outside the first pre-basic molt. Also, young hummingbirds occasionally show a dark necklace of damaged feathers due to being in the nest. This resolved the two most confounding aspects of this report and strongly suggest that the bird involved was a young Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*). One at Warren High School, Warren, 21 October 2002. Class IV-A; 649-01-2002. 2/5 after two rounds.

This report was almost certainly correct but the written descriptions contained a few details which were ambiguously or incorrectly described. This was frustrating since otherwise the descriptions were excellent and seemed to accurately describe a Mountain Bluebird. However the committee would be remiss to ignore the above inconsistencies.

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*). One at Tyler S.P., Bucks, 19 May 2001. Class IV-B; 654a-03-2001. 0/7.

Field identification of this species has not been resolved and there are no known plumage distinctions between this and Gray-cheeked

Thrush. There do seem to be some differences in size and build. One of the more useful may be that Gray-cheeked tend to be longer winged so the primary extension past the tertials is greater than or equal to the length of the tertials (a ratio greater than or equal to one) while Bicknell's is shorter winged with a ratio less than or equal to one. Complicating this are nominate Gray-cheeked Thrush nesting in eastern Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia which are smaller and redder above, hence more like Bicknell's. Until field identification of non-singing Bicknell's has been placed on a firmer footing the committee has decided not to accept reports of this species without sound recordings.

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*). One at Eldred, *McKean*, 5 October 2002. Class IV-A; 826-01-2002. 0/7.

The committee unanimously chose to be conservative on this report as it is a potential first for the state, and involves a notoriously hard to observe species. With records in NY, OH, and MD however it is a species to keep in mind while working autumn sparrow flocks.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*). One in Jackson Twp., *Mercer*, 23 September 2001. Class IV-A; 830a-03-2001. The Jackson Twp. bird was almost certainly a Nelson's, but Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow could not be ruled out. Regardless, this reports definitely pertains to a Sharp-tailed Sparrow and as such helps establish the occurrence of these secretive birds in the state.

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). One in Hartstown, *Crawford*, 27 January 2001. Class IV-A; 840a-01-2001. 3/4. One in Nockamixon Twp., *Bucks*, 30 November 2004. Class IV-A; 840a-01-2002. 4/3 after two rounds.

Juncos are arguably the most taxonomically complicated passerines in North America with some 15 described subspecies. These races will interbreed where ranges overlap, and one race *cismontanus* is believed to be derived from intergradation between "Slate-colored" and "Oregon". Given this degree of complexity Juncos need to be very closely described to turn an identification from "not a Slate-colored" to an "Oregon".

Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*). One in Leesport, *Berks*, 16 November 2001. Class IV-A; 840d-01-2001. 1/6.

Though almost certainly correct, for a species with almost no precedence of occurring in the east an acceptable record would probably have to include a photograph, or at least a feather-by-feather description.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). One at Leighton High School, *Carbon*, 24 March 2001. Class IV-A; 861-01-2001. 3/4. One in Green Lane, *Montgomery*, 20 January 2002. Class IV-A; 861-01-2002. 3/4 after two rounds. One in Steinberg, *Bucks*, 16 December 2001. Class IV-A; 861-02-2001. 3/3 after two rounds. One at Shenango Res., *Mercer*, 27 October 2002. Class IV-A; 861-02-2002. 4/3 after two rounds. One in Buckingham Twp, *Bucks*, 26 December 2001. Class IV-A; 861-03-2001. 4/2 after two rounds.

All of the above records were likely correct, but were not described thoroughly enough to rule out all other possible species. Brewer's Blackbird was removed from the review list in 2003. This species is familiar to birders and poses more of a problem in the description than in the identification. It is a rare but regular fall-early spring visitor to the state and has a fairly predictable pattern of occurrence. The records committee felt that there was not much else to be gained from reviewing additional documentation of the species.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). One at Martin's Creek, *Northampton*, 22 October 2001. Class IV-A; 874a-01-2001. 3/4.

Separation of female and immature Bullock's and Baltimore Oriole is extremely difficult and often requires close and extended views. In this case it was unclear what age and sex was involved.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED because they represent or may represent an escapee or an introduced species not yet established in Pennsylvania. IDENTIFICATION ACCEPTED.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*). One at Galeton, *Potter*, 22 April 2002. (JF; Class V; 104-01-2002). 3/4. Photograph published in PB 16:98. Though not outside the realm of

possibility this species would be extremely unlikely, especially in the spring. The few North American records are from the west coast and usually involve southbound or overwintering birds. Though no one can say for sure where this bird came from, an escape captive seems more likely than an individual from Iceland or Europe.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). One at the Haines-Seville Wetlands, Area, *Fulton*, 13 April 2001. (DS; Class V; 105-01-2001). 2/5. Two at Blue Marsh Lake, *Berks*, 7 April 2002. (JS, RK; Class V; 105-01-2002). 2/5

With on-going reintroduction programs as close as Ohio and Ontario, Trumpeter Swans in Pennsylvania will be assumed to have originated from one of these programs in the absence of direct evidence of natural origin such as a band. Regardless, the species is an increasingly regular visitor and now is the time to compile records of its occurrence so that any decision to include it on the official state list can be based on reliable sightings.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*). One in Buckingham Twp., *Bucks*, 8-19 February 2002. (FT, AM, AB; Class V; 115-01-2002). 2/5 Photograph published in NAB 56:160 Records of this species have apparently been on the increase and show a pattern of occurrence consistent with a wild migrant species. However there are more certain records of escaped captives, including breeding records, than birds of wild origin. At this point, additional, well-documented, records are needed before the species can reliably be considered a naturally occurring vagrant.

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