

NINETEENTH REPORT
of the
PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
April 2012
Nick Pulcinella for the Committee

The Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (hereafter “PORC” or “the committee”) evaluates and archives documentation it receives of any species or recognizable form that is on the Review List for Pennsylvania. In addition it reviews documentation for new species or new subspecies for the state. This report covers 46 records of 26 species. The 41 records accepted represent an acceptance rate of 89%. Reports were received from 26 counties. Top reporting counties were: Erie (8), Cumberland (5), Chester (3), and Dauphin (3).

Highlights in this report include the first records for White-faced Ibis, Prairie Falcon and Anna’s Hummingbird, second records for Allen’s Hummingbird and Townsend’s Warbler, and fourth records for Tufted Duck and Bullock’s Oriole. The Official State List now contains 426 species, 418 in Class I and 8 on the Provisional List (Pulcinella 2011).

PORC encourages observers to document their sightings with photographs, videos or sound recordings when possible, but the committee also urges observers to include accompanying written documentation with all submissions. Written documentation may add details such as missing field marks or descriptions of behavior that are not captured in some photos. The committee continues to emphasize that the primary point of any documentation of a rare bird should be a detailed written description. There are several well written articles on documenting rare birds and observers are encouraged to consult the Committee’s web pages at <<http://www.pabirds.org>>, Dittman and Lasley 1992, and PORC 2000.

The Committee would like to emphasize the importance of submitting documentation directly to PORC. The posting of reports (including written details and photographs) on listservs or other online forums may not safely be assumed to have been discovered by PORC nor be assumed to be understood as documentation of a rarity.

Documentation can be submitted to **Nick Pulcinella, PORC Secretary, 613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380, nickpulcinella@verizon.net**.

Committee News

The Committee membership (with year of term expiration) during this report period consisted of Ben Coulter (2013), Al Guarente (2012) (chair), Jonathan Heller (2011), Tom Johnson (2012), Geoff Malosh (2012), Cameron Rutt (2014) and Dave DeReamus (2013). Nick Pulcinella (2012) is the non-voting secretary. Jonathan Heller rotated off the committee after serving two terms and was replaced by Drew Weber (2014). Cameron Rutt took a temporary leave to assist with ornithological research in Hawaii replaced by Ramsay Koury.

Al Guarente was elected chair for an additional year and Nick Pulcinella was re-elected non-voting Secretary for an additional one year term.

The Committee has a presence on the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology web site at <<http://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 regarding the functions of the Committee.

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, (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.

Class IV-A: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer’s identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.

Class IV-B: A record for which there exists insufficient evidence for evaluation.

Class IV-C: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in favor of an identification other than what was submitted.

Class V: The identification is correct, but the bird represents or may represent an escape or an introduced bird not yet established in Pennsylvania.

Format of this Report

The records are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists’ Union Check-list of North American Birds (AOU 1998) and subsequent supplements. 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 accepted historical records prior to the formation of PORC. Each accepted record includes the locality and county and date(s) when known. In many cases, dates are taken from the seasonal reports published in *Pennsylvania Birds*. Enclosed in parentheses following the date are the name(s) of the observer(s) responsible for finding and/or identifying the bird, if known, followed by a semicolon, then the names of those who submitted documentation (in alphabetical order). 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. An (*) after a species name indicates that the species is no longer on the PORC review list.

Abbreviations: Christmas Bird Count (CBC), *North American Birds* (NAB), National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), *Pennsylvania Birds* (PB); Reservoir (Res.), State Game Lands (SGL), State Park (S.P.), Township (Twp.), Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (9)

Five were photographed at the Deer Valley Golf Course, *Dauphin* 30 May 2010. (Tom Johnson (p); Chuck Berthoud, Jan Getgood, Ramsay Koury, Ernie Johnson, Patricia Williams, Richard Williams; 102-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. First *Dauphin* record. A flock of ten were in Berwick, *Luzerne* 10-19 June 2010. (Jonathan DeBalko (p), Kevin Ripka (p) et al; 102-02-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V24(3):140 and cover. Two were along the Wyomissing Creek, Mohnton, *Berks* 3-8 August 2010. (Katrina Knight (p), Linda Fredericks, et al; 102-03-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. One was in Chambersburg, *Franklin*, 14-15 August 2010. (Dave Cooney (p); Vern Gauthier; 102-04-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. A first *Franklin* record. A single bird visited a small pond in Nottingham County Park, *Chester* 27 June 2010. (Rachel Bishop (p); 102-05-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. A first county record. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks made a strong push into the northeast and Midwest during late spring and summer of 2010 with observations from several neighboring states.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) (3)

One female associating with Ring-necked Ducks at Upper Uwchlan Twp. Water Treatment Plant, *Chester* 19-27 March 2010. (Holly Merker; Devon Bosler (p), Jeffrey Davis (p), Pam Fisher, Al Guarente, Drew Weber (p), m.ob.; 141-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photo published in PB V24(2) inside back cover. First *Chester* record.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) (19+)

An adult male at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 20 February–17 March 2010. (Mark Vass; Jerry McWilliams (p); 149-01-2010; I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V24:38. One immature male found on the Juniata River, *Huntingdon* 19 December 2010. Present and seen by many through 1 February 2011. (Dave Kyler, Trudy Kyler; Wayne Laubscher (p), Drew Weber (p), m.ob.; 149-02-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. One immature male found on the Delaware River near the Martin's Creek Environmental Preserve, *Northampton* 28 December 2010–7 February 2011, a first county record. (Stephen Kloiber, Kathy Sieminski; Tom Johnson (p); Dustin Welch, (p), m.obs. 149-03-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V25:36 and NAB V65:381.

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) (18+)

Three immatures photographed at Wildwood Lake, *Dauphin* 23 August 2010. (Larry Imes (p); 093-02-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. One immature seen on the Juniata River, Millerstown, *Perry*, 14-16 August 2010. (Toby Petersheim; Chad Kauffman (p), et al; 093-03-2010; I-P). 7/0. This species continues to be a rare, regular visitor in late summer.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) (1)

One photographed in Southampton Twp. *Cumberland* 21 March 2010. (Vern Gauthier; Frank Haas (p), et al; 096-01-2010; I-P). 6/0. This long overdue first state record remained at this location for only five hours before flying off. Photograph published in PB V24(2), cover.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (5+)

One light morph adult observed flying over the Militia Hill Hawk Watch, Fort Washington S.P., *Montgomery* 22 October 2010. (Michael Rosengarten; 186-01-2010; Class III). 7/0.

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) (1)

One adult along Mud Level Road, *Cumberland* 20 November 2010-16 February 2011. (Matt Sabatine, Wayne Laubscher (p), m.ob.; 201-01-2010; Class I-P). 6/1. Photograph published in PB V24:39. This bird has made this part of *Cumberland* its winter home for five years but no documentation was ever submitted to PORC. When the bird first appeared in 2005 there was some question as to its origin (wild vs. escaped falconer's bird), but with the bird returning and successfully maintaining a winter territory for five consecutive years, PORC felt that this bird was a true vagrant. Prairie Falcon has an easterly component to its extralimital occurrence and is rare but regular as a migrant and winter resident in both Missouri and Illinois, and there are a few accepted records for Ohio.



Image 1. Prairie Falcon 23 January 2011, Mud Level Road, *Cumberland* (Wayne Laubscher). At long last, the famous Mud Level Prairie Falcon has been added to the official Pennsylvania list.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyula martinica*) (6+)

One immature on an unidentified SGL, *Adams* 12 October 2010. (Mike Weible (p); 242-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Another immature was photographed in Kane, *McKean* 19-24 October 2010. (Rocky Holland (p); 242-02-2010; Class I-P) 7/0. Photograph published in NAB V65:193 and PB V24(4) inside back cover. One adult photographed in the Spring Grove Area, *York* 31 May–1 June 2010. (Deb Kline (p); 242-03-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. It was a banner year for Purple Gallinules in Pennsylvania with a surprising three reports, including one spectacularly photographed in a residential area in far north *McKean* near the Allegheny National Forest. These were the first reports of this species since 2006.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) (16+)

One at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 28 November 2010. (Jerry McWilliams (p); 331-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photo published in NAB V65:74 and PB V24(4) inside back cover.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) (14+)

One in first winter plumage was photographed at Yellow Creek S.P., *Indiana* 4 November 2010. (Justin Bosler (p); 357-01-2007; Class III). 7/0. Several committee members thought the photograph was too small and distant to identify the species but the accompanying written report clinched the identification. This report is a good example of why written documentation remains an important part of rare bird reporting.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) (25+)

One adult in alternate plumage on the Susquehanna River, near Marysville, *Dauphin* 13-19 March 2010. (Ramsay Koury; Devin Bosler (p), m.ob.; 340-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. One observed in a small pond along Mud Level Road, *Cumberland* 20 March 2010. (Vern Gauthier, Ramsay Koury; Matt Sabatine (p); 340-02-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. First record for *Cumberland*. A surprise was an adult in alternate plumage photographed in Bristol, *Bucks* 1 August 2010. (Devich Farbotnik (p), Holly Merker (p); 340-03-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V24:202.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (11)

Several records from 2005 were submitted. One adult in basic plumage in Millcreek Twp., *Erie* 12 November 2005. (Ben Coulter (p) (v); 346-02-2005; Class I-P). 6/0. Another adult in basic plumage at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 20 November 2005. (Ben Coulter (p) (v); 346-03-2005; Class I-P). 6/0. A third bird in basic plumage Millcreek Twp., *Erie* 26 November 2005. (Ben Coulter (p) (v); 346-04-2005; Class I-P). 6/0. The Presque Isle area continues to be the place to look for this species with eight accepted reports thus far.

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) (24+)

Two reports from 2004 were submitted for review. One first-cycle bird was videotaped at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 22 December 2004. (Ben Coulter (p) (v); 348-01-2004; Class I-P). 6/0. A different first-cycle bird was also videotaped at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 26 December 2004. (Ben Coulter (p) (v); 348-02-2004; Class I-P). 6/0.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) (7)

Two in alternate plumage along the Ohio River at Dashields Dam, *Allegheny* 29 May 2010, a first county record. (Geoff Malosh (p); 369-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. An outstanding find for western Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh area. Photograph published in PB V24:76 and NAB V64:253. (Malosh 2010)

Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) (5+)

One present and audio recorded at Fort Indiantown Gap, *Lebanon* 10 June–20 September 2010. (Jerry Howard; Ed Bellion (r), Gary Kinkley (r), David McNaughton, John Puschock (r), m.ob.); 463-01-2010; Class I-R). 7/0.

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) (1)

One adult female present in Shartlesville, *Berks* mid-Oct 2010–13 March 2011. (Renee Gery, Scott Weidensaul (p); Howard Eskin (p), Mike Fialkovich (p), Tom Johnson (p), Jeff Loomis (p), Geoff Malosh (p), Dustin Welch (p), m.ob.; 490-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. A long expected western vagrant, with documented records from MD and NY, this bird was first noticed by homeowner Renee Gery in mid-October. It was successfully trapped, banded and identified 21 November by Scott Weidensaul and thereafter seen by multiple observers during its long stay. Despite several nights of single digit temperatures, the bird was able to survive by taking insects from a nearby water treatment plant in addition to several well-supplied feeders in the neighborhood. Photograph published in PB V24:194 and NAB V65:74.

Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) (2)

One immature male trapped, banded and identified at the Landis Homes Retirement Community near Lititz, *Lancaster*

7 November 2010. (Edith Bailey; Sandra Lockerman, Scott Weidensaul (p), Eric Witmer (p), m.obs; 496-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. This second state record, on the heels of last year's first record, was first noticed on 28 October 2010 when it visited a feeder. The bird remained cooperative and easily seen by many until it departed on 13 November. Photograph published in PB V24:204 and NAB V65:193.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (23+)

An adult male was in Thornhurst, *Lackawanna* mid-Dec 2009–12 March 2010. (Jennifer Grab (p); 666-03-2009; Class I-P). 6/0. Photograph published in PB V24:42.



Image 2. Varied Thrush, 10 January 2010, Thornhurst, *Lackawanna* (Jennifer Grab). This species continues to be a nearly annual winter visitor to Pennsylvania.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) (4+)

One in Upper Mifflin, *Cumberland* 1-5 June 2010. (Deb Siefkin, Jeffrey Davis (p), m.ob.; 699-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. A second bird was in Newville, *Cumberland* 26 May–13 August 2010. (Deb Siefkin; Lee Musser (p); m.ob.; 699-02-2010; Class I-P). 6/0. Breeding could not be confirmed in either instance.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) (11+)

One banded at Powdermill Nature Reserve, *Westmoreland* 1 May 2010. (Powdermill Nature Reserve Staff; 756-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) (7+)

One adult male seen, heard, and well described at Ohiopyle, *Fayette* 16 May 2010. (David Krueger; 746-01-2010; Class III). 7/0. The date falls nicely within this species' spring occurrence in Pennsylvania. Previous spring records are from 12-16 May.

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) (2)

One adult female was at the Cobbs Creek Environmental Center, *Delaware/Philadelphia* 20-21 November 2010. (Anthony Croasdale; Holly Merker (p), Mike McGraw (p), m.obs; 738-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. A surprising find at a small urban wooded oasis. First record for both counties. Photograph published in PB V24:185 and NAB V65:75. (Croasdale 2010)

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) (10)

One at Peace Valley Park, *Bucks* 10-12 October 2010.

(August Mirabella; Devich Farbotnik (p); 829-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V24:205. Another found during the Elverson CBC at Struble Lake, *Chester* 26 December 2009–24 January 2010. (Rick Robinson; Jeffrey Davis (p), m.ob.; 829-02-2009; Class I-P). 6/0. Photograph published in PB V24:43 and NAB V64:254.

White-crowned (Gambel's) Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) (10+)

An old report from 2004 of a bird at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 30 April 2004. (Ben Coulter (p); 838a-01-2004; Class I-P). 6/1.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) (20+)

One was present and well photographed near Saegertown, Crawford, 17 November–8 December 2010. (Clair Landis; Scott Kinzey (p), Geoff Malosh (p), m.ob.; 780-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V25:40 and NAB V65:75. This was the second consecutive late fall/early winter record of this species in *Crawford*.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) (3)

One adult male visiting feeders in Barto and Gilbertsville, *Montgomery* 31 December 2010–15 March 2011. (Karah Davis; Mary Ache; Howard Eskin (p), Tom Johnson (p), Holly Merker (p), m.obs; 874a-01-2010; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in NAB V65:380. This bird was originally photographed in the Davis's yard and the photos were passed along to PORC member Cameron Rutt for identification. The bird remained in this yard for a few weeks then disappeared only to be found a few miles away on the Ache property where it remained (Rutt 2011). This was a first record for *Montgomery*. Photo published PB V25(1) inside back cover.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification not established. (Votes are listed as for/against. A vote of 6/1 or 7/0 is required for acceptance). A number of factors contribute to a report being denied acceptance. It is very rare for a report to not be accepted because the bird was obviously misidentified. More commonly, a report is not accepted because the documentation submitted was incomplete, insufficient or too vague to properly identify the reported occurrence while eliminating all other similar species. The Committee again stresses the importance of taking field notes either while the bird is under study or immediately afterwards. It is worth noting that written reports prepared entirely from memory weeks, months, or years after the sighting are rarely voted on favorably. The non-acceptance of any report reflects the opinion of the committee that the documentation, as submitted, did not meet the meticulous standards needed for adding the report to the official historical record. If the committee is unsure of a specific report, it prefers to err on the conservative side and not accept a good record rather than endorse a bad one. *It is important to note that non-acceptance by no means indicates that PORC or any of its members feel the record did not occur as reported.* All records whether accepted or not remain on file and can be re-submitted for review if additional material is presented.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

One described in flight at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, *Berks* 8 May 2010. Class IV-A; 171-01-2010. 1/6. Though probably correct, the written reports lacked sufficient detail for acceptance.

American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)
One at Presque Isle S.P., *Erie* 15 December 1974. Class IV-A; 520-01-1974. 5/2. This report was circulated for a third time upon request of one of the observers. The report was once again not accepted as no new documentation or information was submitted for review.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*)

Two at Imperial, *Allegheny* 31 March 2009. Class IV-B; 693-01-2009; 0/7. This is a species which should be on Pennsylvania's radar; however its status in the northeast is only accidental. The written documentation was incomplete especially for a record of such significance, and several similar species were not eliminated.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

One at the Trexler Nature Preserve, *Lehigh* 27 June 2010. Class IV-B; 862-01-2010. 0/7. The written report was incomplete and may actually refer to Common Grackle or American Crow.

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

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

One photographed in Pineville, *Bucks* 24 January 2009. Class IV-A; 115-01-2009. 4/3, 0/7. There was no question as to the identification, but the documentation did not include any information regarding behavior, presence or absence of leg bands or whether the bird was by itself or associating with other geese. These are all criteria PORC uses to assess Barnacle Goose reports.

Literature Cited

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- Rutt, C. 2011. Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) in Montgomery County. *Pennsylvania Birds* V25:29

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