

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2019-08-10 23:18:50
Observer's Name	Martin Dellwo
E-mail	birding@phlblader.fastmail.fm
Phone	484-437-3662
Observer's Address	Philadelphia PA 19103 United States
Species (Common Name)	Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Number of individuals	4
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	adult
Observation Date and Time	07-21-2019 7:50 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58344376
County	Philadelphia
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Philadelphia
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	John R. Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum
GPS coordinates of sighting	39° 52'46.68"N 75° 15'45.60"W
Habitat	enclosed impoundment of water, settled down into marshy area
Distance to bird	300m
Viewing conditions	excellent clear day; sun was to my back. Extremely hot day overall but heat shimmer was not evident at this time.
Optical equipment used	Swarovski 8x42 binoculars, photographed with Nikon D500 + 300mm/f2.8 lens + 1.4x teleconverter
Description	large gangly ducks, seen in flight with striking white blaze on wings and dangling pink legs, dark chesnut/black bodies. After refound in march, could see gray neck and head, distinct ring around eyes and pink bills

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

Initially seen in flight in excellent light, flying back and forth 10 - 30 ft above water, across the impoundment from me; no other observers present. I was following Forster's terns in my binoculars when these come into view, were also visible naked eye. They flew around for maybe 5 minutes ranging across perhaps 2/3rd of far shore (from me) of the impoundment. Lost sight but were re-found settled into marshy area at 9am (1:15hrs after original sighting). They were roughly in the vicinity of a flock of Canada Geese, and scattered Wood Ducks and Mallards. Although lighting conditions were not as good when re-found, and a scope was required for best viewing, the essential field marks were evident, and the birds were eventually seen and photographed throughout the remainder of the day by ~20 more birders. When on the marsh, they seemed to mostly rest, with two of the four tucking their heads in. They did not move around or feed during the ~45 min I continued to observe.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Initially I wondered if they might be some odd eclipse plumage of Wood Ducks, which are highly abundant at this location and time of year. But size and overall color jumped out at me immediately as possible Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. I quickly checked my bird guide on my phone, and the obvious white stripe in the wings clinched it. Of course subsequent photos were diagnostic as well.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

BBWD have been seen nearly annually in neighboring NJ, and this year in particular seem quite abundant, with multiple sightings in various locations in NJ, and a flock of 12+ (not sure of total) having been seen and present in nearby Berks County in recent times. Discussion of some of the local birding community had called out this species as 'overdue' and 'most likely to be next rarity' to be seen in Philadelphia.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes; see photos

During

Sibley Birds app on iPhone (during)

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



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