



Notes on Pink-Footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

April 3, 1997, nr. Oley, PA.

Observers: Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper

General appearance: Overall structure smaller and less robust than Greater Snow Goose, head more rounded, with a "gentler" look/expression. The bill was shorter and stubbier than that of GRSG. The bird appeared to be about 75-80% the size of GRSG. The legs and neck were proportionately shorter than that of the GRSG.

Bare parts: The legs were dark pink in color. The base of the upper bill was dark blackish, the center area bright dark pink, running along the side of the bill to its base, and the tip blackish. Eyes dark.

Plumage: The underparts and belly were pale buffy with slight dark grey mottling, merging into a warmer brown neck, cheeks, and crown. There were parallel streaks on the side of the neck (feather lines).

The flanks were darkest -- more heavily barred with greyish black, becoming denser towards the rear of the flanks. Immediately above the flanks was a thin whitish line.

Upperparts -- The back was greyish brown. The wing coverts were dark greyish brown with broad pale buffish brown edges which formed lines across the wings, the scapulars were darker brown (less grey). There was an ashy grey area at the wing bend (see drawing). The flight feathers were dark. The primary tips extended beyond tail. The tail was white with a dark center. There were broad white undertail coverts. We did not see the bird fly so could not observe the underwing nor the overall appearance of the wing in flight. It did stretch out a wing occasionally as it preened, so some of the characteristic grey upper wing area could be noted.

The tertials showed signs of wear -- about the same amount of wear as on the first-summer Snow Geese in the flock. The bird appeared to be moulting and was preening regularly. The Waterfowl book notes that first-winter Pink-footed (and Snow) retain their flight feathers for a late spring moult, although various body feather tracts would have been moulted or in the process of moult by April. For this reason, as well as details of plumage coloration and bill coloration (see above reference), we felt this to be a first-summer bird, not an adult.

Remarks: The bird was with a flock of about 200-300 Greater Snow Geese, which included several blue phase birds. There was a relatively high proportion of first-

summer Snow Geese in the flock, which were in moult, in contrast to the fresh plumage of the adults in the flock.

One of the adult geese had a neck ring --- EF 43 yellow.

Details of the observation: The bird was observed from a distance of about 75 yards with a Questar telescope, magnifications from 45 to 80x. The light was bright, hazy to full sun, from directly behind observers. Time approximately 9:30 am to noon.

Experience with this species: One of the observers, Barry Cooper, is British and has seen thousands of Pink-footed Geese on their wintering grounds in England and Scotland. He has also seen both races (now split by BOU) of the larger Bean Goose, the only possible confusing species. In the words of Cooper, "This is a classic Pink-footed Goose in all respects." The other observer, Mackiernan, has seen hundreds of Pink-footed Geese in Scotland as recently as 1995 and has also seen Bean Goose in that same year.

Appended are copies of field notes taken on site, as well as a sketch made through the telescope (on site). No reference books were consulted prior to taking the notes or completing the sketch.

Snow Goose - EF 43 yellow neck

Canada Goose - 2G4 - tan

Structure

smaller less robust than
SG, head more rounded
"gentler" look. Shorter
stubbier bill

Shorter legs - dark pink

Shorter than SG, neck is shorter than SG

Appears to be moulting -
preening regularly

75-80% size of (Greater)

SG.

Underparts + belly are
pale buffish w slight
dark grey mottling,
merges into warm brown
neck, cheeks + crown
w 11 streaks. Eyes dark

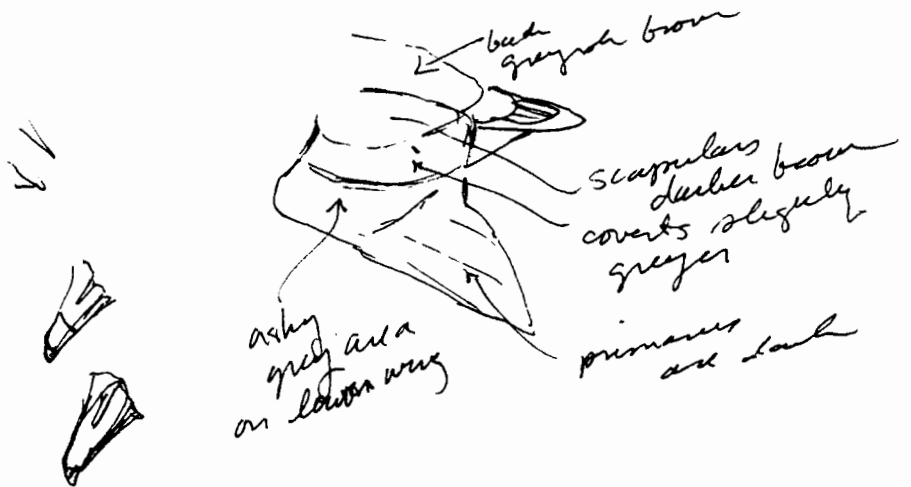
Upper bill base is dark
blackish, center area bright
dark pink, runs up side
of bill to base, tip is
blackish

Flanks are darkest -
more heavily barred w/ greyish
black, becoming denser towards
back of flanks.

Immediately above flanks
is a thin whitish line -

Upperparts - very variable
dark brown w/ broad pale
buffish brown edges which
form lines across wings
Primary tips extend beyond
tail - tail is white w/
dark center, broad white
undertail coverts

Tertials show signs of
wear - moulting



Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

On Saturday April 5, 1997, Robyn and I observed the Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) that had been reported at a pond along DeTurk Road, Oley, Pennsylvania. We observed the bird from about 9:15 am until 11:00 am.

Description:

A goose smaller than the surrounding Snow Geese with dark brown head and upper neck which contrasted with the grayer brown body color. The bill was black with a pink band around the center of it. The pink extended along the lower part of the upper mandible toward the base of the bill. The legs and feet were pink and a spur was noticeable on the rear of the foot. There were no bands on the legs. The bird was observed on the far bank of the pond 150 feet away. It was seen sitting, sleeping, walking, swimming, splashing after Snow Geese, and submerging itself completely under water.



References:

National Geographic Society. 1987. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, 2nd ed. National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

Submitted by:

Don Henise
763 Green Spring Road
Newville, PA 17241
Home (717) 776-6550
Work (717) 532-9121 ext 3170
deheni@ark.ship.edu

Pink-footed Goose

Tom Bailey, 08:21 PM 4/15/97, Pink-footed Goose in PA.

1

Return-Path: <owner-birdchat@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
Delivered-To: pabirds@REDROSE.NET
Date: Tue, 15 Apr 1997 20:21:20 -0400
Reply-To: Tom Bailey <hanrac@AOSI.COM>
Sender: "National Birding Hotline Cooperative (Chat Line)"
<BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
From: Tom Bailey <hanrac@AOSI.COM>
Subject: Pink-footed Goose in PA.
To: BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

I'm sorry if this has already been mentioned, but I don't remember seeing a post about it.

In late April - mid-May, 1995, there was a fantastic "fallout" of Eurasian birds in Newfoundland, including the first North American records for Common Redshank. One of the other species that turned up was Pink-footed Goose - at least 5 birds. Perhaps the Quebec & Pennsylvania bird was one of these five. Assuming that none of these five worked their way back to Greenland/Iceland (or have been shot), there were/are at least five wild Pink-footed Geese on this side of the Atlantic.

See the August 1996 issue of BIRDING for more info.

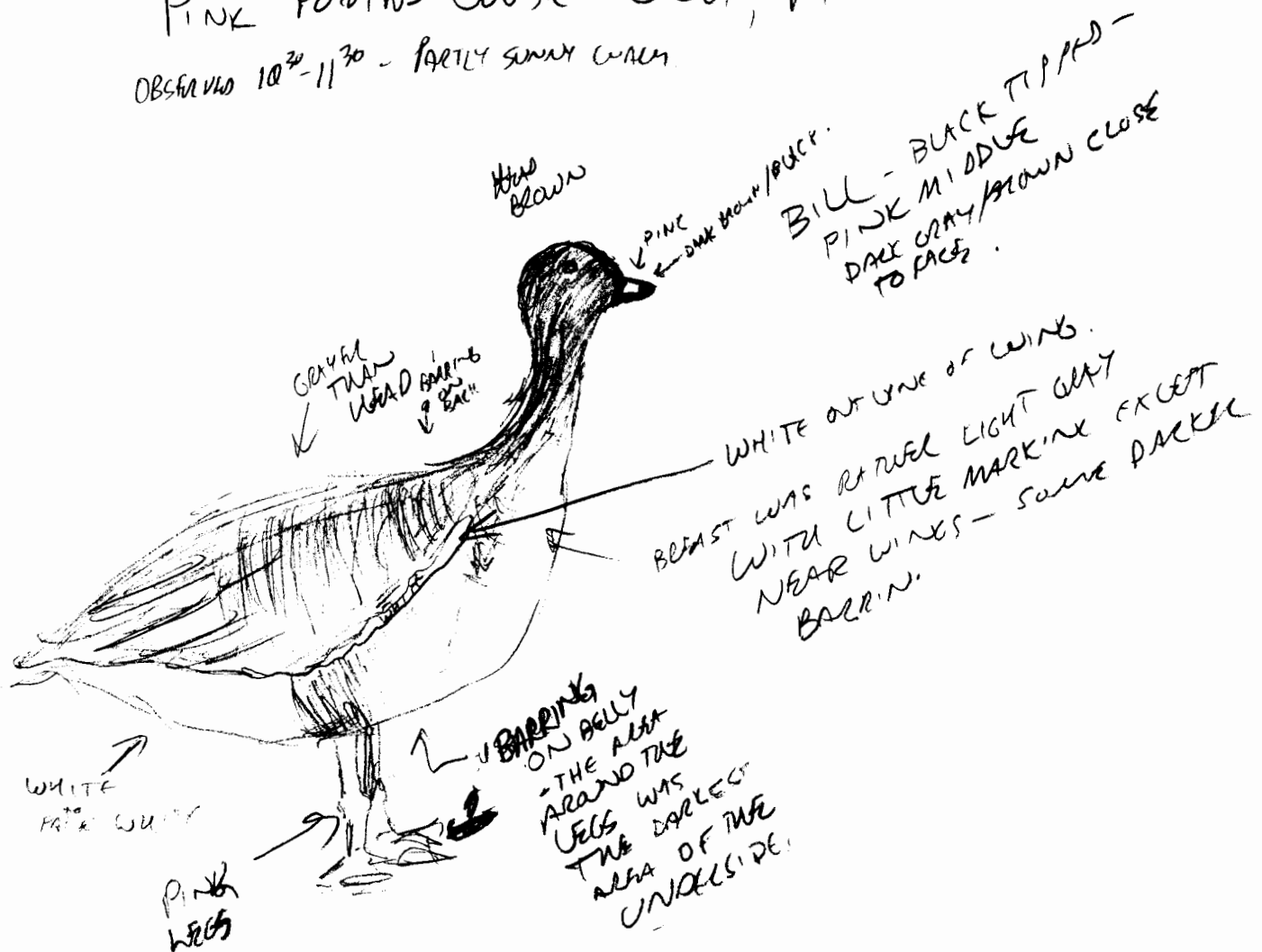
Tom Bailey
Robbinsville, NJ USA
hanrac@aosi.com

Pink-footed Goose
Oley, PA
March 30, 1997
Mark McConaughy

I also went to see the Pink-footed Goose near Oley in Berks County on Sunday, 30 March 1997. I took a lot of photos of this bird and made one of my poor sketches of it while I was there. These will be forwarded to you once the film has been developed. I took photos with a 500mm Spiratone mirror reflex lens on a Nikon 6006 camera and also tried some with a 2x extender making it the equivalent of a 1000mm lens. I hope to get at least one or two useful ID photos of the bird (I shot a role and a half of slide film)! I also took some videotape of it that I will include with the slides. I doubt the video will be of sufficient resolution to provide proof of the bird without the slides.

The Pink-footed Goose was observed from 10:30 to 11:30 AM. There were a few cumulus clouds that occasionally occluded the sun for a short period of time, but it basically was seen in good overhead sunlight. There were a lot of people already watching the bird when I arrived. I first saw the PFG in the water at the back edge of a small farm pond. It later climbed up on the rear bank of the pond where its legs could be observed. The rather stubby beak of this goose had a black tip, pinkish middle section and dark gray to black section where the beak joins the face of the bird. The head and neck of the PFG were a brownish color with some darker lines running down the neck. The breast was pale gray with little barring. The back, sides below the wing and belly were a grayish brown and there was barring which seem to get finer or narrower as it went toward the tail. The darkest area below the wing was the belly area around the legs. The rear below the wings past the legs and undertail were also pale gray to white. The legs were decidedly pink. I expect you will get a few reports of this bird and hope you got a chance to see it, too.

Pink footed Goose OLEY, Pa. 3/30/97
 OBSERVED 10³⁰-11³⁰ - PARTLY SUNNY WITH



VIDEOTAPED + PHOTOS, TOO

Bruce & Mary Gustafson of the Bird Banding
Lab were looking at the Pink-footed on Easter Sun.
He thought maybe the
bird was a first-winter,
but this seems to indicate you can only tell if
it is in hand. The stuff about the
bill is interesting, however.

8488 Snowden Oaks Pl.

Laurel, MD 20708

April 12, 1997

Rudy Keller
71 Lutz Rd.
Boyertown, PA 19512

Mary was adamant that the Ross' Goose
present at Oley was just that, and not
the hyb. some were calling it.

It was good to have an opportunity to talk with you several weeks ago. With regards to aging Pink-footed Geese, the best reference I could locate is the Identification guide to European non-passerines by K. Baker. A copy of the pages that pertain to Pink-footed Geese is enclosed. Basically, the juveniles of this species undergo a molt during the first-winter, after which they closely resemble the adults in their plumages. If the bird was in the hand, the presence of retained juvenile wing coverts be evident would allow the bird to be aged as second-year. However, for a bird in the field, there is no way to conclusively separate the second-years from the adults during this time of the year.

With regards to the bill color, a number of people present during the time I watched this bird (as well as myself) noticed that the bill coloration was noticeably different than what is shown in the field guides. The pink coloration was more extensive than a band near the tip of the bill as is shown in these guides, nearly extending to the base of the bill along the sides. However, the Handbook to the birds of the Western Palearctic depicts a Pink-footed Goose with a bill pattern that matches the Pennsylvania individual. The depicted bird is labeled as a juvenile, but apparently some adults can have similar bill patterns as well.

Hope that some of this information is of interest. My apologies for the delay in sending this information to you, but this is a very busy time of year for me (especially at work). By the way, I would be curious to learn when the Pink-footed Goose departs from Pennsylvania. As long as the bird leaves (has left?) with the Snow Geese on the northward migration to Greenland, one can make a reasonable case for the bird have wild origins. However, should the Pink-foot remain for an extended period of time (well after the Snow Geese have departed), then its origins may be seriously questioned.

Sincerely,

Bruce Peterjohn

Bruce Peterjohn

over

Pink Footed Goose

Albert Floyd, 07:45 PM 4/14/97, PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

1

Return-Path: <ted@dept.english.upenn.edu>
Delivered-To: pabirds@redrose.net
Date: Mon, 14 Apr 1997 19:45:40 -0400 (EDT)
From: Albert Floyd <ted@dept.english.upenn.edu>
Subject: PINK-FOOTED GOOSE
To: Franklin Haas <pabirds@redrose.net>

Hi. My guess is that most of these east coast vagrant waterfowl are legitimate. After all, we know that things like Fieldfares get here every now and then. Moreover, we know that at least one palearctic waterfowl species occurs regularly in eastern North America -- I'm thinking of Eurasian Wigeon, of course. Just probabilistically speaking, it seems likely that some of the more common palearctic waterfowl (e.g., Bean Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Barnacle Goose) should make it to eastern North America, every year.

Also, I think that the contribution of zoos and private collections is overrated. Private collections of waterfowl are a lot less popular now than they were 50-100 years ago. And zoo collections aren't all that big these days, either.

Of course, a skeptic will always say that you can't be certain. That's true, but you have to draw a line somewhere. Nearly any vagrant *could* have been ship-assisted, or escaped from captivity, or whatever. A lot of decisions by state records committees ultimately have to be subjective. I'm not talking about cases of identification, where you strive for absolute certainty; but some of these questions of origin get a little too speculative sometimes, if you ask me.

By the way, even cases of simple identification can be rather more complicated than we realize. Did you follow the BirdChat thread from several months ago, about the phalarope photograph on the cover of the British journal Nature? Nearly everyone, including some nationally recognized bird identification experts, pronounced the bird to be a Red Phalarope; but it was definitely a Red-necked Phalarope. This was a full-color, close-up photograph, too.

There really is an element of uncertainty in evaluating records of rare birds. To their credit, some of the P.O.R.C. members that I know acknowledge this problem. As far as I'm concerned, the most

Printed for pabirds@redrose.net (Franklin Haas)

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important

task for P.O.R.C. is to collect as much data as possible. I guess I don't view the official decisions as important as the volume of data out

there. A researcher wants to be able to say something like: "there were

at least seven Sooty Terns in Pennsylvania during the passage of Hurricane Fran"; or "Hooded Merganser bred for the first time in six Pennsylvania counties in 1996"; or "a Pink-footed Goose was present in early 1997".

The thing is, you can't have questions of "countability" or "ship-assistance" or whatever, if you don't have any records to begin

with. Don't get me wrong; I think P.O.R.C. is doing a fine job of collecting those records. I sometimes think back to the Dark Ages before

P.O.R.C. and PA Birds, and I marvel at how far we've come in so little

time. A New York friend of mine, on reading over the third quarter records for 1996, commented that PA had more good birds than NY.

Nobody in his right might would have said that, fifteen years ago.

Best,

TF

Return-Path: <owner-birdchat@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
Delivered-To: pabirds@REDROSE.NET
Date: Sun, 13 Apr 1997 09:11:15 -0400
Reply-To: Katrina Knight <kknight@EPIX.NET>
Sender: "National Birding Hotline Cooperative (Chat Line)"
<BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
From: Katrina Knight <kknight@EPIX.NET>
Subject: Pink-footed Goose (gone)
To: BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

The Pink-footed Goose that was being seen in Oley, PA with a flock of Snow Geese could not be located yesterday. The Snow Geese that it was with are gone too. If you see Snow Geese headed north from here, take a careful look! If it is relocated, I'll post again.

Katrina Knight
kknight@epix.net
Reading, PA

Return-Path: <owner-birdchat@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
Delivered-To: pabirds@REDROSE.NET
Date: Tue, 15 Apr 1997 12:20:12 -0500
Reply-To: Clifford Miles <a348ncmiles@ATTMAIL.COM>
Sender: "National Birding Hotline Cooperative (Chat Line)"
<BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
From: Clifford Miles <a348ncmiles@ATTMAIL.COM>
Subject: Info needed for Pink-footed Goose
To: BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

Chatters, as you may know, a Pink-footed Goose has been seen in Pennsylvania this spring. Someone has already mentioned that the bird still had spurs. The PA records committee is considering the bird right now. I seem to recall a Pink-footed Goose being seen with Snow Geese last fall in Quebec or Ontario. This could be the same flock, making its return migration. Also, I noticed that one of the Snow Geese in the PA flock was wearing a yellow collar. The flock took flight, and I was unable to relocate the bird to read the numbers. Did someone manage to get the information off of the collar? This could tell us, perhaps, where the flock was heading, if the bird was banded on the breeding grounds. If any info is known on the origin of the banded Snow Goose and the dates of the fall Pink-footed Goose, could you please post that info to me and the rest? Thank You.
Clifford Miles, Mt. Lakes, NJ A348NCMILES at ATTMAIL.COM

108-01-1997

Pink-footed Goose
Anser brachyrhynchus
Berks County
March 29 - 12 April, 1997

On March 29, 1997 a Pink-footed Goose was found feeding with a small flock of Snow Geese on a small pond near the intersections of Routes 73 and 662 in Oley, Berks, Co. Over the course of the next several weeks, it was observed by a number of birders from far and wide. The identification of the bird was rather straight forward, a goose smaller than the accompanying Snow Geese, with a shorter and stubbier bill which had a black tip, a pink middle section and a dark gray or black section where it joined the face. The legs were dark pink. The overall color of the bird was grayish-brown above and pale buffy below with dark heavily barred flanks. Some observers felt that the tertials showed some signs of wear and that the bird appeared to be molting.

Distribution: Pink-footed Goose breeds in eastern Greenland, Iceland and Svalbard. The Greenland and Iceland birds winter in Scotland and northern and eastern England while the Svalbard population moves south through western Scandinavia to winter from western Denmark through Germany to Belgium. Vagrants have occurred as far east and south as western Russia, Romania and the Azores and westward to North America.

Occurrence in North America: There are about 7-8 records of this species for North America. Six birds have been recorded in Newfoundland (four of these together in one flock) and two for Quebec. An additional Pink-footed Goose was found in the company of Snow Geese in November 1996 just south of Montreal. There is some speculation within the birding community that the Oley bird may be this same individual, which migrated south with the Snows and now moving northward.

Occurrence in Pennsylvania: There are no previous records of Pink-footed Goose for the state.

When a sighting of an extralimital waterfowl occurs, the question of origin, wild vs. escape, always arises and this case is no different. Some observers have mentioned the lack of a leg band, the apparent wear of the flight feathers and its association with Snow Geese as indicators of the wildness of this bird. As far as what is known about this species in captivity, it is well established in captivity in the US but breeding here is limited (Ryan pers. comm.). US aviculturists supplement their stock from European collections. Ryan also mentioned that in theory any captive bred bird in the US is supposed to be banded by the breeder. He also states that this rule is little enforced and even less adhered to. Ryan reports that the customary manner of keeping any waterfowl does not result in feather damage normally. This record has yet to begin circulation within PORC and very little in the way of written documentation has been received. It is hoped that those who observed the bird will submit written documentation especially regarding the appearance of the flight feathers so a more thorough assessment of this sighting can be made. Whatever the outcome, this sighting has generated much thoughtful discussion and education within the birding community, not to mention a look at a species we seldom get a chance to see.

References:

ABA Checklist: Birds of the Continental United States and Canada. Fifth Edition 1996.

Madge, S. and Hilary Burn. 1988. Waterfowl an identification guide. Houghton-Mifflin Co. Boston, MA.

I would like to thank Rich Ryan for his constructive comments regarding this species.



Mr. Richard Ryan
38 Brookside Ave.
Livingston, NJ 07039

June 7, 1997

Mr. Nick Pulcinella
201 Elm St.
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Dear Nick,

In re: to the Pink-footed Goose, it is well established in captivity in the US but breeding here is limited. It breeds better in European collections and US aviculturists supplement their stock from this source. If it was a legally imported bird it would be banded unless the band subsequently came off. In theory any captive bred bird in the US is supposed to be banded by the breeder. This rule is little enforced and even less adhered to. As far as determining the wildness of this bird there is very little to go on. Some captive birds show a fat belly but most do not. The customary manner of keeping any waterfowl does not result in feather damage normally. In fact because they seldom fly in captivity, a captive's feathers often show less wear than a wild bird, especially in Spring before molt. The only way one can be virtually certain of the wildness of any goose of this genus is to see a band that was put on under the auspices of the wildlife agency of the country of origin and contact that agency for the circumstances. Sorry to be so discouraging but that is reality. It is also why I never bother to go anywhere to see one of that group of geese.

Very truly yours,

Richard Ryan

Return-Path: <owner-birdchat@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
Delivered-To: pabirds@REDROSE.NET
Date: Tue, 15 Apr 1997 13:07:26 -0400
Reply-To: Katrina Knight <kknight@epix.net>
Sender: "National Birding Hotline Cooperative (Chat Line)"
<BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
From: Katrina Knight <kknight@epix.net>
Subject: Re: Info needed for Pink-footed Goose
To: BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

On Tue, 15 Apr 1997, Clifford Miles wrote:

> This could be the same flock, making its return migration. Also, I
noticed
> that one of the Snow Geese in the PA flock was wearing a yellow
collar. The

The Snow Geese with the yellow collars were banded at Bylot Island in
the
Canadian Arctic. The one that was with the Pink-footed Goose (EF43)
was
not reported anywhere else this winter according to Mary Gustafson
from
the Bird Banding Lab. I have already written to the person who is
working
with the collared geese to inquire about whether or not a Pink-footed
Goose has been reported with the collared Snow Geese at any other
time. I
haven't gotten an answer yet.

Katrina Knight
kknight@epix.net
Reading, PA

Return-Path: <owner-birdchat@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
Delivered-To: pabirds@REDROSE.NET
Date: Tue, 15 Apr 1997 16:09:03 -0400
Reply-To: DENIS LEPAGE <aag053@AGORA.ULaval.CA>
Sender: "National Birding Hotline Cooperative (Chat Line)"
<BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU>
From: DENIS LEPAGE <aag053@AGORA.ULaval.CA>
Subject: Re: Info needed for Pink-footed Goose
Comments: To: Clifford Miles <a348ncmiles@ATTMAIL.COM>
To: BIRDCHAT@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

Clifford,

The Pink-footed Goose that was seen last fall was just south of Montreal (Saint-Timothe to be precise) between 2-4 november. That bird was also with Snow Geese. It also crossed my mind that the PA bird may be the same observed last fall and it may well turn up again here in Quebec soon. It may be easily missed if it hides in the group of 350 000 Snow Geese reported last weekend south of lac Saint-Pierre (the highest count ever produced here during the spring migration)!

Snow Geese with yellow collars were all marked, in recent years at least, on Bylot Island (73oN 80oW), just north of Baffin Island. This is a joint project between Laval University and the Canadian Wildlife Service. As I mentioned last fall, a part of the Greater Snow Goose population is reaching NW Greenland. Theoretically, Pink-footed and Snow Geese are not sympatric, even in Greenland, but a vagrant Pink-footed in NW Greenland may well join a group of Snow Geese on their migration towards North America. Pink-footed Geese nest in Eastern Greenland, according to Boertmann (Meddelelser om Gronland - Bioscience 38: 1994), and only one record exists for Western Greenland. A large icelandic population also molt in eastern Greenland.

I hope this helped,
Cheers,

Denis Lepage aag053@agora.ulaval.ca
Departement de Biologie
Universite Laval (Quebec) G1K 7P4
Canada

On Tue, 15 Apr 1997, Clifford Miles wrote:

> Chatters, as you may know, a Pink-footed Goose has been seen in Pennsylvania
> this spring. Someone has already mentioned that the bird still had spurs.
> The PA records committee is considering the bird right now. I seem to recall
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or Ontario.

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> that one of the Snow Geese in the PA flock was wearing a yellow collar. The

> flock took flight, and I was unable to relocate the bird to read the numbers.

> Did someone manage to get the information off of the collar? This could tell

> us, perhaps, where the flock was heading, if the bird was banded on the

> breeding grounds. If any info is known on the origin of the banded Snow Goose

> and the dates of the fall Pink-footed Goose, could you please post that info

> to me and the rest? Thank You.

> Clifford Miles, Mt. Lakes, NJ A348NCMILES at ATTMAIL.COM

>

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Date of Sighting: 27 March 1997 to 12 April 1997

Location: OLEY

County: BERKS

Observer(s): many observers

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: many observers

Written Description: YES

Photo: YES

Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
P. Schwalbe	X							
K. Parkes	X							
R. Ickes	X							
P. Hess	X							
J. McWilliams	X							
T. Floyd	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F C Haas

Date:

4-19-97