

112-01-1995

REPORT OF AN UNCOMMON OR RARE SPECIES AND/OR HIGH NUMBERS

SPECIES: Ross's Goose, *Chen rossii* , (By the way, Ross's IS the correct spelling according to proper English usage!)

OBSERVER(S) WRITING ACCOUNT: Paul Schwalbe, Glenna Schwalbe

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 28 October 1995

DATE OF REPORT: 7 November 1995

LOCATION: Montour Preserve, Montour Co., PA.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OBSERVATION: This is the earliest fall record for this species in Pennsylvania, as well as the first record outside of the three county area of Lancaster, Chester and Berk's counties in southeastern Pa.; thus the first for central Pa. and for Montour Co. (Schweinsberg 1988; Santner, Brauning, Schwalbe & Schwalbe 1992; and PA BIRDS, Vols. 5-9, 1991-1995).

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH OBSERVATION WAS MADE: The bird was found between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. There was some wind and it was partly cloudy. The bird was with a flock of Canada Geese, *Branta canadensis*, about 30-40 in number, and a few Mallards, *Anas platyrhynchos*, were also present. However, no Snow Geese, *Chen caerulescens*, were present. It was close at hand, about 75 ft. away at first, but we got as close as about 25 ft. from the bird when it was on land. Initially it was in the water with the Canada Geese, but then walked up on shore with them and joined a small group of Mallards. Photographs (slides inclosed) were taken of it in the water and on land. Good size comparisons were made with Mallards both in the water and on land (see photos).

HABITAT: The flock of birds - geese and ducks - were on the east side of Lake Chillisquaque near two piers that project out into the water. While on land the goose grazed on grass for a short period of time.

DESCRIPTION: The following notes were taken while looking at the bird (it was a white phase individual). It was smaller than one of the male Mallards that passed by it in the water, but appeared equal to or a little larger in size with most of them. The bill was short in comparison to the bill length of the Snow Goose, pink in color except for a blue wedge at the base of the upper mandible and had a dirty horn-colored nail. There was no 'smile' as there is on the bill of the Snow Goose. The legs and feet were pink, no bands were present. The head was very rounded, not elongated toward the base of the bill as it is on a Snow Goose, and for a goose the neck was very short. Seen at close range with a

Kowa TSN-4, 25X scope, the plumage was immaculate, no dirty or worn feather tips.

ELIMINATION OF OTHER SPECIES: A small Snow Goose would of course be the most likely point for confusion, but this is ruled out by the points of comparison made above; the bill shape and color, and leg color eliminates an albino Mallard.

EXPERIENCE (with this and similar species): We have had no experience with this species in spite of searching through tens of thousands of Snow Geese during the past five years.


OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: The bird was found with the naked eye (thanks Glenna) but the details were studied with B & L - 8 X 42 Elites and a Kowa TSN-4, 25X.

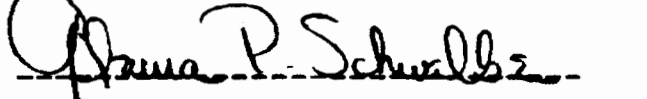
REFERENCES/LITERATURE CITED:

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS, Vols. 5-9, 1991-1995.

Santner, S. J., D. W. Brauning, G. Schwalbe, & P. W. Schwalbe. 1992. *Annotated list of the Birds of Pennsylvania*. Pa. Biol. Survey Contribution No. Four., O.T.C.

Schweinsberg, A. R. 1988. *Birds of the Central Susquehanna Valley*.





112-01-1995

To: Nick Pulcinella, Rare Bird Reports Editor
First Central Pennsylvania Record of Ross' Goose
Chen rossii
Montour County
Wesley Egli

On 28 October 1995, while stopping to survey Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) at the P.D. & L. Montour Preserve's Lake Chillisquaque, I noticed fellow bird-friends Paul & Glenn Schwalbe near the boat launch ramp on the south shore of the lake. They summoned me to come quickly to observe a bird which was among a flock of ± 120 Canada Geese, which were swimming within 30-40 feet of shore. The time was approximately 1500 hours with good light under a variable sky. With 7X42 Leitz binoculars, I watched for at least 5 minutes a bird which was about the size of a Mallard with a rounded head, short neck, beautiful white plumage with black primaries. It lacked the familiar "grin" of a Snow Goose, but I noted a bluish, triangular patch at the base of a very small bill; this was easily viewed with both binoculars & a Nikon 20X45 spotting scope. The bird eventually came on shore with several Canada's to feed, where I noticed it's pinkish legs (lacking any leg bands). I continued to watch the bird for about 45 minutes, approaching to within 15-20 feet. Photographs were taken by Paul & myself.

P.O. Box 381

Picture Rocks, PA 17762

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Date of Sighting: 28 October 1995 to 28 October 1995

Location: MONTOUR PRESERVE

County: MONTOUR

Observer(s): Paul Schwalbe

Glenna Schwalbe

Date of Submission: 1995

Submitted by: Paul Schwalbe

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							
N. Pulcinella	X							
E. Kwater	X							
R. Ickes	X							
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe								X
S. Feldstein	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

5-1-96