

112-03-1997

## ROSS' GOOSE

*chen rossii*

**Location:** Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, Lancaster County

**Date:** March 8, 1997

**Time:** 12:10 to 1:00 PM

**Weather:** Clear. Visibility excellent.

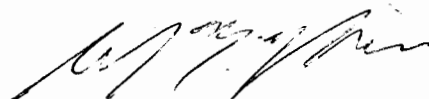
**Observer:** Jerry McWilliams

**Optics:** Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Kowa TSN 4 Spotting Scope at 30X

**Viewing distance:** approximately 200 yards.

**Details of sighting & description:** I estimated at least 25,000 Snow Geese on the lake, especially on the south side of the island. I spent at least an hour sorting through the thousands of Snow Geese from Willow Point in search of a Ross' Goose before finally discovering an adult white morph. I immediately alerted the forty plus birders present of the Ross' Goose. Within about ten minutes another birder got on the bird and announced that there were now two of them together. I relocated the birds with my scope so everyone had the opportunity to get a look at them while they were temporarily away from the main flock of Snow Geese. Both Ross' Geese stayed together on the water throughout the time I observed them.

The following details were noted: Both Ross' Geese were identical in plumage and structure except one was slightly larger. Both birds were about 2/3 the size of the Snow Geese. Like white morph Snow Geese, they were entirely white with black primaries. The most distinctive features were the head shape and bill size and shape, giving them a pug-faced look. The Ross' Geese heads were short and round topped with steep foreheads unlike the longer, flat topped, sloping heads of the Snow Geese. Their bills were pink and very short, about half the length of the Snow Geese bills, and were about as wide at the base as they were long giving their bills a triangular look. The basal half of their bills were a dusky blue-gray. Both geese lacked the black border "grinning patch" along the cutting edges of the lower and upper mandibles that is typical in Snow Geese. The Ross' Geese necks were shorter but at least as thick as the Snow Geese. I took several photographs of the birds through the spotting scope. See enclosed photos.



# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Ross' Goose (Chen rossii)

Date of Sighting: 8 March 1997 to 8 March 1997

Location: MIDDLE CREEK WMA

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

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	5		2					
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

4-19-99