

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555

September 23, 1997

Dennis Miller
1415 Bushkill Center Road
Nazareth, PA 18064

Dear Dennis,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Barnacle Goose you saw at Green Pond Road on 20 March 1996 to P.O.R.C. After careful review and much discussion, we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The identification of the Barnacle Goose is not in question but the "wild origin" of the bird is suspect. Barnacle Geese are popular in many waterfowl collections and escapes are inevitable. The possibility of an escaped individual joining a wild migrant flock is not out of the question. However, some committee members feel that some of the Barnacle Geese reports are probably of true wild birds that have strayed to North America. Thus there is the dilemma, how can a particular Barnacle Goose be proven one way or the other to be a wild bird. P.O.R.C. feels it is better to err on the side of caution and not accept a record of a Barnacle Goose unless it can be proven without a doubt, preferably by means of a leg band or neck collar, that the bird is of a "wild origin"

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record # 115-02-1996

115-02-1996

Barnacle Goose [*Branta leucopsis*]
Northampton County , Pa.

Date: March 20, 1996

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Location: Flooded fields along Green Pond Rd. [Northampton County]

Obs. time: Approx. 8 minutes

Weather: Overcast skies, Temps. in the 40's

Equip. Swift Audubon 8.5 x 44 binoculars

On Wednesday, March 20th, enroute home from work, I passed a flooded cornfield in central Northampton County. This particular field habitually floods in the late winter months as a pond across the road overflows. This makes the area an extremely good migrant trap.

On the 20th, several hundred Canada Geese [*Branta canadensis*] were swimming in the field while dozens more were patrolling the corn stubble. As I scanned those swimming, I came upon a goose unlike its companions. This goose had grey upper parts with black barring as opposed to the brownish Canadas. It also was smaller than most of the other geese. Its size was similar to that of a Brant [*Branta bernicla*] or a Snow Goose [*Chen caerulescens*]. The entire front of the head was white, while the top of its head, neck and breast was black. A black line was visible between its bill and eye. It swam in the same fashion as the Canadas, occasionally dipping its head and neck into the puddle to search for food.

Since I have a child in day care I had to leave alot sooner than I would have wished. Once home I immediately called several birders in the area of the sighting, grabbed my camera and returned to the field. Returning approx. 1 1/2 hours after the original sighting we were unable to relocate the goose.

With the help of my Peterson's Field Guide to Eastern Birds and my National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America, I was able to identify the bird as a Barnacle Goose [*Branta leucopsis*].

Dennis C. Miller
1415 Bushkill Center Rd.
Nazareth, PA 18064
[610] 759-7514

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Date of Sighting: 20 March 1996 to 20 March 1996

Location: GREEN POND ROAD

County: NORTHAMPTON

Observer(s): Dennis Miller

Date of Submission: 1996

Submitted by: Dennis Miller

Written Description: YES Photo: NO 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			3		4			
DECISION					X			

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F C Haas

Date:

2-22-97