

115-01-2000

## Unusual Bird Report

Person submitting data AUGUST MIRABELLA

Date 1/17/01

Address 1443 WHEATON LN N. WALES, PA. 19454

Phone 215-368-0591

Observers Many

Date(s) Seen 11/10, 11/11, 12/2, 12/14, 12/23/00

How long observed TOTAL APPROX 2 hours

Where Observed PEACE VALLEY PARK, NEW BRITAIN TWP, BUCKS CO, PA.

Conditions of observation From 100 feet to several hundred feet with LEICA 7-APD 20-60 Zoom

(Time of day, weather, distance

Lighting good on all sightings

to bird, optics, etc)

### Behavior & Habitat

(what was the bird doing,

what habitat was it in.)

Travelling in company with 17000 (counted 12/28 by Ann & Ken Kitson)

Canada Geese. Also, seen during period were one to three Greenland or wh. fronted Geese. Both Barnacle Geese had no leg bands and behaved as wild birds; resting and swimming with the wild geese and moving away from approaching people along with the Canada Geese.

Species Barnacle Geese

Number seen 2 (not together although

### Description

(Describe size, color & pattern

above & below, head, bill, wings,

tail, sex, age, etc. as needed -

use drawings on reverse side

if helpful.)

Typical Barnacle plumage & about the size of a Brant. Black cap, neck, and breast. White face with black bill much smaller than the Canada bills. Sharp break between the black breast and light belly and flanks. Back was grayish with dark barring. The two could be told apart because one had some ruffled cap feathers and the back pattern on the same bird was more diffuse especially on the upper back. This one may have been a first winter bird.



### Similar Species

(what similar species might it be

and how can they be eliminated

from consideration.)

Canada Goose - Light breast, smaller white on face, brown back

Brant - No white on face, white necklace, darker belly, flanks, & back

Video tape was made by Devitch Farbutnik

115- 01- 2000

## SIGHT RECORD REPORT FORM

### 1. Basic data

**Species, English name:** Barnacle Goose.

**Scientific name:** *Branta leucopsis*.

**Number of birds:** one.

**Sex:** unknown.

**Age:** adult, based on the clean black, white and gray edgings on the bird's back.

**Place:** Lake Galena at Peace Valley Nature Center.

**Nearest town:** Dublin.

**County:** Bucks.

**Date(s) of your observations:** 3 December 2000.

**Time:** about 20 minutes beginning around 10:55 AM.

**Earlier/later dates by others, if known:** See below.

**First and last dates, if known:** 10 November to 28 December 2000; the bird may still be present.

### 2. Observer data

**Observer:** Jennifer Hanson.

**Address:** 13 Vincent Pl., Montclair, NJ 07042.

**Telephone:** home: 973/746-4482, work: 212/698-7588.

**E-Mail:** ammodramus@hotmail.com.

**Other observers:** Leif Austad, Arlene Oley, many others not known to me.

**Who found it?** Not known.

**Who first identified it?** Not known.

**Who also is reporting it, if known?** Not known.

### 3. Observation details

**Was it photographed?** Not by me. **Videotaped?** Not by me. **Sound recording made?** Not by me.

**Optical equipment used:** Kowa TSN2 scope with 30x wide angle eyepiece, Swift Audubon 8.5 x 44 binoculars.

**Camera/other equipment used:** None.

**Distance from bird:** several hundred yards.

**Weather and light conditions:** The weather was sunny and cold (20s or 30s). At the time of the observation, the sun was on the eastern side of the sky, so that the light came from in front of us as we watched the bird. This produced a great deal of glare when looking straight across the lake. Luckily, the bird was not between us and the sun, but off to the right side, so we could see it better.

**Are photographs and/or recordings included with this report?**  
No.

**If not, are they accessible to the Committee? How?** Not known.

### 4. Experience

**Indicate your prior experience with this and similar species.** I have seen one Barnacle Goose before, a flyby bird at Suomenlinna island in Helsinki, Finland, in May 1999. I have a great deal of experience with Canada Geese (*B. canadensis*) and Brant (*B. bernicla*); also with blue morph Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*), which a Barnacle could resemble from certain angles; a "Blue" Goose was present at Lake Galena on 3 December. I have also seen the various European *Anser* geese in Scandinavia.

**What books, illustrations, and advice did you consult?** The *Collins Bird Guide* by Killian Mullarney et al., National Geographic guide (3rd edition).

**How long have you been birding?** Twelve years as of September 2000.

**Was this report written from notes made during or after the observation, or from memory?** From notes written during the observation; a copy of the notes and field sketch is attached.

**5. Description:** Using as many additional pages as needed, give complete details of this observation. Include information on the bird's plumage, shape and size, vocalizations, habitat, behavior, etc. Describe what you actually saw, and include photocopies of your original notes and sketches.

The Barnacle Goose looked a great deal like the hundreds of Canada Geese also on Lake Galena; surprisingly so, in fact. Especially with the light conditions, from certain angles (most notably when the head was turned away) it looked like another Canada as the glare made the Barnacle's gray tones appear more brownish. From the front, the white face on the black neck recalled Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). The head seemed somewhat small in proportion to the neck, which in turn seemed a bit slim in proportion to the body, so it seemed slightly ill-proportioned. On the other hand, the neck seemed somewhat thick, especially down toward where it joined the body. The black of the neck came up onto the top of the head; only in a side or front view was the white face visible. The bill was small and dark; dark lores joined it to the dark eyes so that bill, lores and eyes seemed to be one unit.

The largely gray back was barred with black and white, making a very trim appearance when the light was good. These conspicuous edgings age the bird as an adult; an immature Barnacle would not have white edgings to the back feathers. The bird's sides were gray as well, contrasting with white undertail coverts and a black tail. All in all, when the light was right, it was a very neatly patterned bird. In size, it was somewhat smaller than the Canadas and was frequently lost to view behind the bigger geese.

**Name the species you consider ID contenders; explain how you eliminated each.**

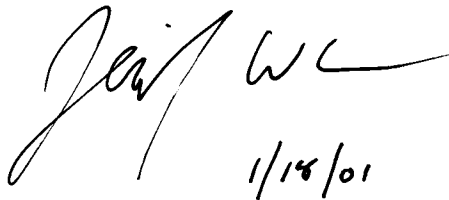
The main confusion species would be the other *Branta* geese; the black, gray and white color scheme does not fit the *Anser* geese. The white face and lack of brown tones in the plumage rule out any of the Canada Goose complex. The white face also rules out any of the Brant subspecies.

Possibly the most troublesome confusion bird would be a "Blue" Goose, with its white head on a dark neck, but a "Blue" Goose has a dark gray body, not the paler gray found on the Barnacle Goose. A "Blue" Goose's head is typically all white with white extending partway down the neck, not white with black coming onto the top of the head; the "Blue" Goose at Lake Galena showed this pattern. A "Blue" Ross' Goose (*C. rossii*) would be more likely to show black continuing onto the top of the head, but also has dark gray body plumage and is too small for a Barnacle. Both of these *Chen* geese also have paler bills than does a Barnacle Goose, and the eye is isolated in the white face, not joined to the dark bill by dark lores. This gives a completely different "expression."

Finally, a partial albino can be ruled out because of the neatness of this bird's markings, and the fact that it shows the classic Barnacle Goose pattern. A partial albino of a different species would likely have a more irregular pattern or would have other features that would not be typical of a Barnacle Goose.

Whether or not this individual is a wild bird, however, is not a question I can answer on the knowledge I have. I am satisfied that this bird is in fact a Barnacle Goose; where it comes from, I would rather not speculate.

Signature:



1/18/01

12/3/00 2

"HAWAIIAN BREAKFAST BUFFET"

- PEACE VALLEY
- SN GO
- CA GO CC?
- CHICKADEE SP.
- BLUE GOOSE
- BJ
- CARW
- CoGo
- CoME
- MALL
- GBBG flying over
- GBH w/WHITE THIGHS
- ACRG
- Black trail
- white undertail coverts
- grey sides
- back barring pattern
- white black gray barring on back
- big gosse body w/ relatively thin neck & small head

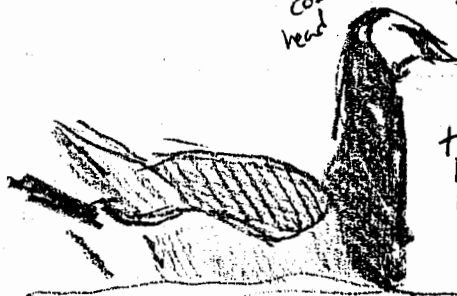
BLUE GOOSE  
head & neck  
white black wing tips  
cross



looked like  
Ows from front



black of neck  
comes up onto  
head  
small dark bill  
running into dark  
eyes



thick  
black  
neck



MONACY

eye ring  
light bc  
wider in  
but pr  
lighter  
chest  
vested  
looked  
but less  
in center  
yellowish  
wash  
on  
belly  
very strik  
w. 7  
few  
wing tips  
to tail  
a little  
beyond

WTSP  
IJoFi  
WBN  
BCC

HAMA  
FL

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Barnacle Goose ( Branta leucopsis)

Date of Sighting: 10 November 2000 to 17 January 2001

Location: PEACE VALLEY PARK

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): August Mirabella, Devich Farbotnik, Jennifer Hanson

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: August Mirabella, Devich Farbotnik, Jennifer Hanson

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

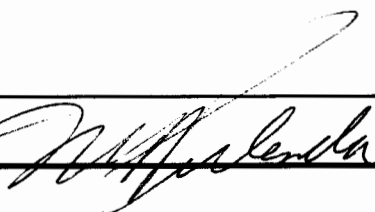
Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Couchman	X							
P. Hess	X							
J. Stanely							X	
B. Reid							X	
<del>R. Lebewong</del> P. Rodewald							X	
M. Sharp							X	
TOTALS	2		1				4	
DECISION							X	

Comments:

3/4/0

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 10/27/01