

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

12 February 2002

Randy C. Stringer
409 Shady Drive
Grove City, PA 16127

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the following species. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it cannot accept these records based on the documentation received.

Trumpeter Swan near Leesburg May 5-15, 1999: Five members voted for acceptance in Class V as a correctly identified species representing an escape or an introduced bird not yet established in Pennsylvania. Two members voted against acceptance, believing that all of the necessary details were not listed for a diagnostic identification. These included the shape of the culmen and the exact degree of eye "isolation." In addition one member noted that a lack of bare yellow facial skin in the loreal area is not diagnostic for Trumpeter Swan; it is sometimes absent in Tundra Swan as well. A minimum vote of 6-1 is required in the PORC bylaws for acceptance.

Cave Swallows at Moraine State Park on November 25, 1999: The vote was three in favor of acceptance and four not in favor. The dissenters felt that Cliff Swallows could not be conclusively eliminated in complete plumage detail by a sighting of fast-flying birds in poor light and rain at a minimum of 100 yards.

On this date, the increasing late-fall pattern of Cave Swallow vagrancy along the Atlantic Coast and Great Lakes does imply that Cave may be more likely than Cliff. A majority of the Committee, however, felt that much more detail would be required before adding this species to the provisional state list of sight records.

If it is any consolation, consider that Ontario's third provincial record was documented with 14 pages of details and photographs (Curry, B., and K. A. McLaughlin. 2000. The November 1999 Cave Swallow invasion in Ontario and northeastern North America. *Ontario Birds* 18: 13-26).

Brewer's Blackbirds at Pennsy Swamp on November 13, 1999: Members opinions' were divided, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly explains the delay in informing you of the result). The final vote was one in favor and six not in favor.

The dissenting members raised a variety of concerns, primarily what they felt were insufficient details lacking a description of bill shape and explicit comparison with other species.

One member summarized the general feeling this way: "Given that one of the birds was said to be a 'fall variant' Brewer's with brown feather edges on chest, head, and lower back (i.e. looking even more similar to a fall Rusty Blackbird), it becomes more important to include thorough descriptions. Finally, size relative to other blackbird species is not mentioned at all."

As you know, non-acceptance does not imply that you did not identify any of these birds incorrectly, but rather that the documentations in some members' view were not sufficient to support the identifications conclusively. We trust that this will not discourage you from submitting reports on any future rarities you find.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

Records #105-03-1999 (Trumpeter Swan), 576-01-1999 (Cave Swallows), 861-05-1999 (Brewer's Blackbirds)

105-03-1999

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: TRUMPETER SWAN Date of this Observation: _____

Date Found: 5/3/99 Last Date Seen: 5/12/99

Location: HWY #19 3 MILES SOUTH OF LEESBURG

Township/City: _____ County: LAWRENCE

Person Writing this report: RANDY C. STRINGER

Address: 409 SHADY DRIVE
GROVE CITY, PA 16127 Phone: 724-458-0446

Other Observers: SUZANNE BUTNER, LINDA WAGNER, BARB DEAN

Who found the bird first: LINDA WAGNER

Other documentation included: (Circle all appropriate items)(Make sure all attached items are fully labeled)

Photograph Audio Recording Video Recording

If a Specimen, where is it stored? _____

Description: (Attach additional pages as needed —Please do not write on back of this form)

Lawrence Co.

105-03-1999

Trumpeter Swan

Identification:

My first sighting of this swan was on May 1, 1999. Local residents tell me that it had been present since April 24 or so (the precise day is under question). This extended lake is ideal for swans due to the depth that ranges from a few inches to only a few feet in the majority of its makeup. Last year a Mute Swan stayed here for several weeks.

The large size and overall pure white body easily identified it as a swan. My first recollection of it was the way that the neck had a pronounced bend towards the lower third near the body of the bird. It almost appeared to sag in that direction.

The head was held horizontally, noticeably broad and flat headed. The bill was all black with no other coloration present. It met under the eyes of the bird and formed 'v' as it angled down towards the middle part of the bill. This field mark was quite pronounced and apparent.

Size comparisons could not be acquired since no other waterfowl were in the vicinity. Some observers reported seeing pink lips on the bird and others did not mention this characteristic. The bird could be leisurely studied with little interference.

It had a band on one of the legs with orange/yellow coloration. The Vindicator, a newspaper in Youngstown, Ohio, reported in April that several Trumpeter Swans had been released in Cleveland, which is only 100 miles or so to the northwest.

Several people saw this bird independently and reported it as a Trumpeter without collaboration. Many observers at Presque Isle State Park saw several this spring. Further sightings were made in the Pymatuning area, as well.

Randy C. Stringer

July 23, 1999

From notes made on May 1, 1999

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Trumpeter Swan (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

Date of Sighting: 3 May 1999 to 3 May 1999

Location: 3 MILES SOUTH OF LEESBURG

County: LAWRENCE

Observer(s): Randy Stringer, Suzanne Butcher, Linda Wagner, Barb Dean

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Randy Stringer

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

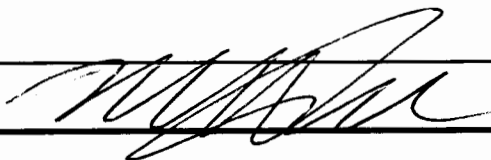
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Recording: No			Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead							X	
D. Couchman							X	
P. Hess							X	
R. Ickes				X			X	
B. Reid							X	
P. Rodewald					X			
M. Sharp					X			
TOTALS				1	2		4	
DECISION							X	

Comments: 0/7

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

8/12/02