



105-04-1999

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: Trumpeter Swan Date of this Observation: Photo 7/15/99
Details 8/9/99

Date Found: 7/15/99 Last Date Seen: still present in Oct, 1999

Location: Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park

Township/City: _____ County: Butler

Person Writing this report: Paul Hess

Address: 1412 Hawthorne St, Natrona Hts PA 15065

Phone: 724-226-2323

Other Observers: many observers - July, Aug, Sept,

Who found the bird first: Walt Shaffer

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)

Photo: Walt Shaffer
Details: Paul Hess } attached

105-04-1999

SPECIES: Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

DATE: 9 August 1999 (present at least since July) TIME: 1530-1600

LOCATION: Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County PA
(Porter's Cove, in the the lake's southwestern arm)

OBSERVERS: Paul Hess, Dave Darney (This documentation by Hess,
1412 Hawthorne St., Natrona Heights PA 15065)

WEATHER AND LIGHT: Bright sun, 70s; no "heat waves."

DISTANCE, OPTICS: 100 yds; Kowa 822 scope @ 60X & Celestron @ 70x

BEHAVIOR: Preening and napping at water's edge.

DESCRIPTION:

Size: It appeared to be much larger and heavier than a Tundra Swan, perhaps even larger than a Mute Swan, and at least twice the size of nearby Canada Geese.

Overall shape: Very heavy-looking, with a bulky body, long thick neck, and very long bill. The neck was held stiffly straight with no curve. The back curved gradually upward from the base of the neck, with the upperparts rising to a peak near the bird's rear. With head under its wing in sleep, the long neck kinked in a "U" at the base.

Plumage: Entirely adult-white, though with a slight rusty tint on head, neck, breast and flanks -- undoubtedly from iron staining.

Head shape: The head sloped gradually upward from the base of the bill to the crown with almost no forehead, peaked toward the rear of the crown, then curved comparatively sharply down to the neck.

Bill shape: 1. Overall, it formed a long shallow triangle, with the base very short compared with the length.
2. Upper edge of the upper mandible was essentially a straight line showing no curve, and the same angle continued along the crown.
3. Nostril was conspicuously long compared with the total bill length and about halfway between the base and the tip.
4. Tip of the upper mandible curved down sharply with a nail-like appearance.
5. Base of lower mandible curved up smoothly to the eye, with the black extending to the lower edge of the eye. Base of upper mandible extended straight back, meeting the upper edge of the eye. Result: rear edge of black was fully as wide as the eye.
6. Viewed head-on, the base of the upper mandible was distinctly "V" shaped across the forehead.

Bill color: entirely black, though with what appeared to be a slightly paler line down center of the underside of the lower mandible from bill base to tip.

Legs and feet: entirely black

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES:

The long, shallowly triangular bill shape, all-black bill color, and stiff straight-necked position eliminated Mute Swan. The completely black bill also eliminated Whooper Swan.

Details of the bill size and shape were the key features eliminating Tundra Swan. In contrast to the characters described above for this bird, a Tundra would have:

1. bill shorter compared to its depth at the base.
2. upper edge of upper mandible with slightly concave curve upward, rather than an essentially straight line.
3. nostril closer to eye than to bill tip.
4. tip of upper mandible with no noticeable nail.
5. base of lower mandible curving more sharply toward the eye, and the black area barely reaching the eye.
6. upper bill base more "U" shaped than "V" shaped between the eyes, when viewed head-on.

Tundra Swan would also show a more rounded head, not a gradually sloping forecrown.

After studying the bird for half an hour we compared its features, particularly bill details, with those emphasized in "Identifying Trumpeter and Tundra Swans" (Birding, October 1994).

EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPECIES: This was my first Trumpeter, though of course the bill characters and other features were familiar from reading ID literature over the years.

This report written 11 August, 1999, from notes made at the scene.

Paul Hess

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Trumpeter Swan (Tachycineta bicolor)

Date of Sighting: 15 July 1999 to 9 August 1999

Location: BUTLER

County: MORaine STATE PARK

Observer(s): Paul Hess, Walt Shaffer, Dave Darney

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Paul Hess, Walt Shaffer

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

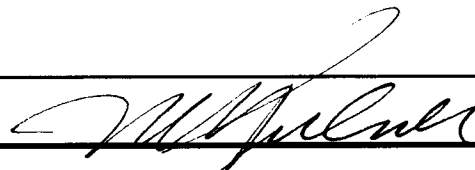
Specimen: No

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	
M. Sharp	X							
B. Reid	X							
P. Rodewald							X	
TOTALS	2						5	
DECISION							X	

Comments: 2/5

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 3/12/01