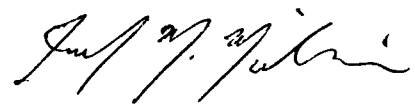


149-01-1991

HARLEQUIN DUCK
(Histrionicus histrionicus)

At approximately 11:15 AM on Sunday Feb. 17, 1991 I saw and identified a female Harlequin Duck at the channel on Presque Isle State Park. The bird was actively feeding about 150 yards away southeast of the south pier. It remained solitary the entire time, except when other ducks swam past it and when, on one occasion, a female Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) fed in its company for about 5 minutes. The direct comparison with the Surf Scoter and with passing female Buffleheads (*Bucephala albeola*) gave me excellent opportunities to study them together. The Harlequin Duck was only slightly larger than the Bufflehead, but almost $2/3$ the size of the Surf Scoter. The Harlequin was entirely dark grey-black, the same tone as the Surf Scoter. Its head was round with a steep forehead and a small Bufflehead-sized bill which was dark, but paler than the rest of the bird. There was a perfectly round white patch directly behind the eye. In front of the eye and at the base of the bill there were two paler patches, one above the other. The lower patch was wedge-shaped, widest at the bottom. The irregular round upper patch was slightly separated from the bottom patch. The neck was very thick, equal in width to the Surf Scoter's neck and much thicker than the Buffleheads'. The tail was as long as or slightly longer than a Bufflehead's'. The tail was usually carried flat on the surface of the water, but occasionally it was up at about a 45 degree angle. A pale belly patch was exposed when the bird stood erect on the water to stretch. When diving it spread its wings slightly as it submerged in the same way that scoters and King Eiders do.

The bird was viewed by me for approximately an hour and a half under good light conditions. The sky was cloudy (stratus), but the cloud cover wasn't dense. The wind was westerly at approximately 5 mph. The last 2 days had been stormy with snow squalls, winds in excess of 25 mph, temps. below 10 degrees F. and wind chill factors at 30 degrees below zero. I used a Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and a 25X Bushnell Spotting Scope. My past experience with the species includes 4 on Presque Isle and 1 at Pittsburgh. All were females. Other birders who saw the Harlequin Duck were Joyce Hoffmann, Walter Schaeffer, Geoff Robinson, Linda McWilliams, Dave Darney, and Sam Stull. Dave Darney and I photographed the bird.



Gerald M. McWilliams

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Harlequin Duck**

Date of Sighting: **February 17, 1991**

Observer(s): **Dave Darney, Jerry McWilliams**

Date of Submission: **1991**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater	X						
B. Haas	X						
F. Haas	X						
R. Leberman	X						
G. McWilliams	X						
S. Santner	X						
P. Schwalbe	X						
TOTALS	7						
DECISION	X						

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

B. Haas

Date:

8-15-91