

149-01-1995

Harlequin Duck

Histrionicus histrionicus

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: May 10, 1995

Time: 4:45 to 5:30 PM

Weather: Mostly cloudy, a cold front was approaching with large cumulonimbus clouds building, wind southwesterly to about 10 mph.

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Tsn 4 Kowa scope at 30X

Details of sighting and description: While waiting for an approaching storm, I scanned the water off Beach 11 as well as Gull Point. I spotted a Laughing Gull that had just landed and after watching it for a couple of minutes I turned my attention to the few ducks that were about 100 to 150 yards off shore. Most were female Bufflehead, but one that was turned away from me was blackish and clearly not a Bufflehead. When it turned and was broad-side to me, it became clear that I was looking at a female Harlequin Duck. It was slightly larger than the Bufflehead that it was associating with and was completely dark grayish-black except for the head. The head had three pale spots. The spot behind the eye was round and more prominent than the two in front of the eye. The two spots in front of the eye were dirty white and were oblong and nearly converged to form one spot. Unlike the sloping forehead of Surf Scoter, this bird had a steep forehead similar to the Bufflehead and the bill was short and stubby much like the Buffleheads. When the Harlequin Duck stood up and stretched its wings, there were no markings on the all dark wings. The underside of the body was seen when it stretched and a dusky patch was seen about midway on the belly. The duck frequently held its relatively long tail high above the water similar to the way a Ruddy Duck holds its tail. The Harlequin flew a short distance a couple of times and the all dark wings and body were easily observed as well as the thick neck, stubby bill, steep forehead and longish tail.

See photograph.

I have seen this species along the Atlantic Coast in New Jersey as well as five of the ten birds that have been recorded in Erie County.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

Date of Sighting: 10 May 1995 to 10 May 1995

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1995

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: YES Photo: YES 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	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

J. C. Haas

Date:

5-1-96