







Harlequin Duck

Histrionicus histrionicus

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Location: Presque Isle S.P., Erie, Pa.

Date: February 20, 2010

Time: 3:15 to 4:40 PM

Weather: clear, wind W to 15 mph, temp. 32 F

Viewing distance: less than ½ mile

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 at 40X

Details: Mark Vass called me to tell me he had found an adult male Harlequin Duck in the channel. I arrived on the south pier where Mark was standing with his scope at 2:15 PM. He said it was no longer in view since it swam behind the north pier. We waited and searched for about 30 minutes without the bird showing again, so I drove to Presque Isle S.P. where I scanned the north side of the north pier from Perry Monument. After about a half an hour I spotted the duck. I watched it actively feed and swim among the many Common Goldeneye for about 30 minutes.

Despite the viewing distance, conditions were good and I was able to see the following characteristics on this very distinctive bird: There was full sun on the bird, so the slaty-blue color and bright orange flanks were diagnostic. It was smaller than the Common Goldeneyes. The entire upper side, head, and neck were slaty blue. There were several well defined white stripes or bars on the bird. One broad vertical white band crossed the face behind the bill. And another ran vertically along the side of the neck and a couple along the side of the breast. A broad white horizontal band crossed over the shoulder. There was a bold white spot on the face behind the eye. The flanks were entirely bright orange. I watched a Herring Gull try and steal food from the Harlequin Duck. The duck flew about 15 feet and immediately dove to continue feeding. It was very active when it surfaced, constantly swimming around first going to the left, than to the right. Even though it was not very close to me, once I located the bird is was easy to find among the mostly male Common Goldeneye.

I have seen several females and a couple of immature male Harlequin Ducks on the park, but this is the first adult male I have seen there. I have seen one adult male that was shot by a duck hunter on the park about 20 years ago. I have seen many adult males on the Pacific Coast in the past.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*

Date of Sighting: 20 February 2010 to 17 March 2010

County : ERIE

Location : PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Observer(s): Mark Vass, multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2010

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson								
B. Coulter D. DeRamus	X							
G. Rutt B. Coulter	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	6							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

6/0

Signature (Secretary)

Nick Pulcinella

Date:

10/1/2010