



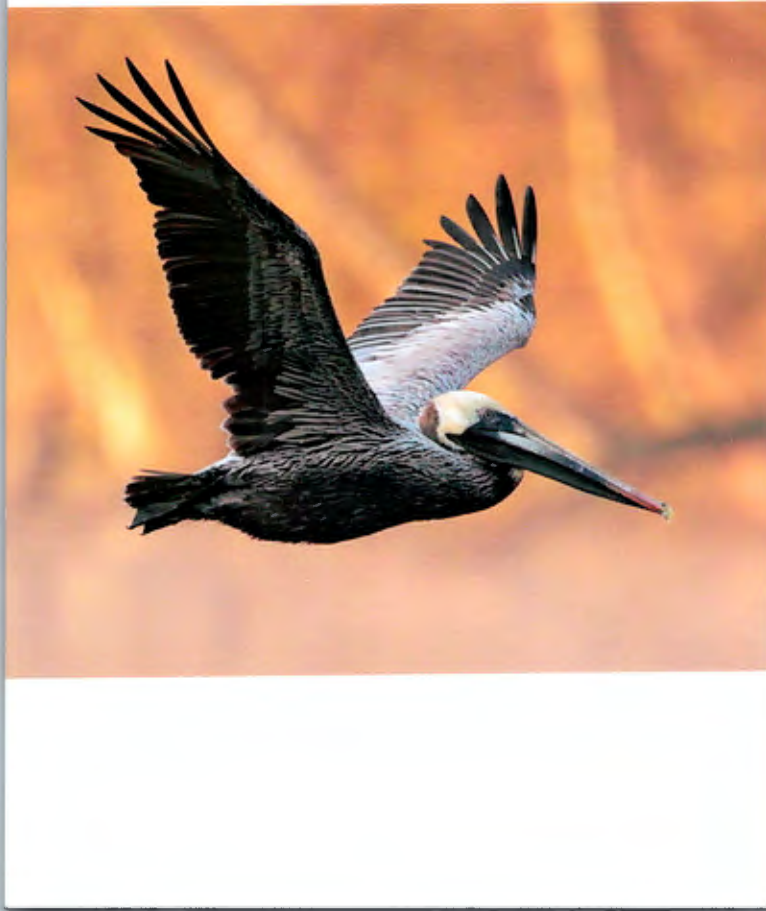


Wet Pelican  
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White Pelican  
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**Brown Pelican at Boone Reservoir, Washington County PA, 14 April 2011**

**Observer:** Geoff Malosh, 450 Amherst Ave., Moon Township, PA 15108-2654, 412.735.3128 [pomarine@earthlink.net](mailto:pomarine@earthlink.net)

**Facts:** Temperature: 40 F in morning, 60 F in afternoon. Wind: unknown. Sky: partly cloudy

Time: 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM and again 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Optics: Leica Ultravid 10x42 binoculars

Camera: Canon 1D Mark IV Digital SLR, 500mm f/4L IS with 1.4x teleconverter, tripod

Photos or audio recordings: 6 photos submitted, taken from a distance ranging from 20 to 100 yards, attached to this message

Accompanying observers: many

Documentation date: 17 April 2011

Submission date: 17 April 2011

**Photos:** Six attached

All photos are cropped from the original frame and reduced slightly to their current file size.

**Observation:** A Brown Pelican was reported by Kate Rodgers to the PABIRDS list on the evening of 13 April 2011 from Boone Reservoir in Washington County. Boone Reservoir is a small municipal reservoir in a mixed commercial/suburban residential area. I asked Kate for pictures of the pelican which her post indicated she had obtained, which she supplied within a few minutes. The pictured unambiguously showed an adult Brown Pelican. I arrived at the reservoir at first light the next morning and found the pelican still in place. It was resting in a crouched position with its neck coiled to rest on its back and its bill resting on its breast. It remained in this position on the water for an hour or so, but eventually took flight and circled the reservoir several times searching for fish. It was at this time that I obtained the attached photos. I had to leave the area for the day to go to work, but returned in the late afternoon and found the bird still present. At this time I saw the bird carrying itself with much more energy than before, flying frequently and swimming with its head upright. I also witnessed a few plunge dives, one of which resulted in a successful capture of a fish. Very late in the day the bird circled high above the reservoir, leading me to think that it was about to leave, but it returned and rested on the water. It was still present at last light but was gone the next morning.

**Description and Discussion:** The pictures are self-evident of this distinctive species. To this I can only add two relevant points:

1. The bird was not banded, in other words, it was not obviously an escaped bird. One of the pictures attached clearly shows the absence of bands.
2. It seemed to be at least a little wary of humans. Brown Pelicans are very tolerant of human activity and proximity. When this bird circled the reservoir looking for fish, it routinely passed within 25-30 yards of observers, but when resting always chose a spot on the opposite side of the reservoir from people, and when people nevertheless got a little too close to it, it would swim away.

There was a strong storm that passed through western Pennsylvania on 12 April. This storm

featured a strong south and southeastern flow and apparently brought other regionally rare birds to the area, for example, a Snowy Egret to Allegheny County on 4/13 (first county record), and Red-throated Loon and Lesser Black-backed Gull to Allegheny Co. on 4/12 during the height of the storm. All of these factors (no bands, wariness, storm), taken with the exhaustion it displayed early in its stay, suggest it was a wild bird brought to the area by this storm. Whether it came from the Gulf of Mexico or from the mid-Atlantic states is an open question (a brief analysis I made of weather patterns in the eastern US from 4/9 to 4/13 suggests it could have been either). Regardless of its origin, the bird was strong enough to recover from its long flight, and having fetched some food at the reservoir on 4/14, took off to parts unknown in the darkness later that night.

**Prior experience:** Many thousands seen in coastal areas of North America over many years. First sighting in Pennsylvania.



**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation – Round One**

Species: Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Date of Sighting: 13 April 2011 to 14 January 2011

County : WASHINGTON

Location : BOONE RESERVOIR

Observer(s): Kate Rodgers, m.obs.

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Geoff Malosh

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	
D. DeReamus	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
B. Coulter	X							
R. Koury								
D. Weber	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	6							
DECISION	X							

**Comments:**

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: