

074-01-1993

POREC ✓

April 19, 1993

Anhinga-Anhinga anhinga

On Sunday, April 18, there was a persistent W-SW wind approximately 15-20mph. and an afternoon temperature hovering in the low 60's. In the past I have found these type of days to be good for searching the skies for diurnal migrants. This day was no exception, I had already observed several Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks, Osprey, American Kestrels and small flocks of Tree Swallows, when at approximately 1715 hrs. I saw three large dark birds soaring very high directly overhead. To the naked eye they appeared as three dark specks lazily circling in a NNE direction, but when using 10x binoculars they appeared quite different. All three birds appeared cormorant-like and two of the birds were entirely black. The third bird was black except for a light-brown color from its throat to the upper belly, which could be seen whenever the bird turned and would catch the sunshine. The head and neck extended straight out from the body giving it a long slender-neck appearance ending with a long pointed bill. The wings were dark and large and extended out further from the body than a cormorants. The tail extended straight out in a fan-like shape much longer than a cormorants. I knew at once I was watching three Anhingas, though I couldn't believe it, having seen the species several times in the past and as recently as three weeks ago migrating in a similar fashion over Santa Ana NWR in Texas.

I observed the birds for about a minute when I realized I should try to photograph them to not only document the sighting but also to convince myself and others that I hadn't finally gone over the edge. I ran inside and grabbed my camera and lens but upon returning I couldn't relocate the birds despite several agonizing minutes of searching the cloudless skies.

Anhingas are known as excellent fliers and I have observed them in Florida soaring at some incredible heights on warm afternoons. I feel that their ability to soar for long distances and with the help of the day's strong southwesterly allowed them to fly well north of their normal range.

Nick Pulcinella
201 Elm Ave.
Swarthmore, PA 19081

cc P.O.R.C.

Al Guarente-county compiler PA BIRDS
David Cutler-regional compiler American Birds

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Description

The following description is from notes I jotted down immediately after I observed the birds.

SHAPE Cormorant-like but larger.

UNDERPARTS Two of the birds were completely dark from head to belly. The third bird was light brown in color from head to the upper belly with the rest of the underparts dark. The head and neck on all three birds was long and slim and extended straight out from the breast.

UNDERWING The wings were long, wide and straight and appeared dark.

UNDERTAIL The tail was long and fan-like and appeared dark.

BARE PARTS The bill was long and pointed and from underneath it appeared to be an extension of the neck.

JIZZ All three birds soared effortlessly interspersed with slow flaps. They appeared to be strong fliers well accustomed to such high altitudes.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILAR SPECIES The only species I feel the birds could be confused with would be one of the cormorants for which these birds differed in several features. Although the body size of the birds observed was approximate to that of a cormorant the shape of the body and wings and tail were quite different. The body shape was slender as opposed to the bulky shape of a cormorant, with a long slim straight extending neck and head as opposed to a short and usually S-shaped head and neck of a cormorant. The wings were long wide and straight as opposed to the shorter more rounded wings of a cormorant. The tail on the birds was long and fan-shaped as opposed to the usually short narrow tail of a cormorant. From underneath the birds gave a "flying-cross" type of appearance when they were soaring, a feature I've noticed before when observing Anhingas and never in cormorants. Although the birds were at a great distance, when they would turn towards the sun I couldn't see either an orange or white throat patch of the two eastern cormorants.

EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPECIES I have seen Anhingas many times in Florida and just recently in Texas.

CONCLUSION I feel that I observed three Anhingas, two males and one female soaring over Swarthmore, Delaware County, PA.

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Drawings made 4/18/93



-dark

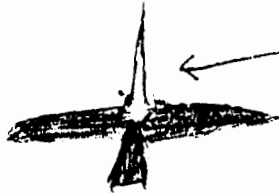


- head + neck long - pointed

- dark

- wings long - straight

- Tail fan-shaped



light brown

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga)**

Date of Sighting: **18 April 1993 to 18 April 1993**

Location: **SWARTHMORE**

County: **DELAWARE**

Observer(s): **Nick Pulcinella**

Date of Submission: **1993**

Submitted by: **Nick Pulcinella**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** 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					X
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes								X
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
J. Skinner			X					
TOTALS			6					1
DECISION			X					1

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

2-23-94