

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

8 February 2001

August Mirabella
1443 Wheaton Ln.
N. Wales, PA 19454

Dear August,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Anhinga at Upper Gwynedd Twp. on 6 May 1997. As you suspected might be the case in your documentation, the committee regrets that we cannot accept this record. A majority of members felt that the bird was most probably an Anhinga but that the evidence -- through no fault of yours, but merely the brief sighting -- was not sufficient for a completely satisfactory identification.

The committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean that the bird was not the species reported, but rather that the committee believes the documentation submitted does not support the identification conclusively.

We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you may find in the future.

Finally, the committee apologizes for the unacceptably long delay before all members were able to vote on the record. Circumstances beyond our control caused the problem, and we believe that we are back on a timely track.

Sincerely,

For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

P.S. Beginning this year observers will receive postcards acknowledging that the committee has received their documentation. In addition, whereas observers formerly were notified only when reports were not accepted (in disappointing or irritating letters like this one), they will now receive cards announcing that their records *have* been accepted.

Record #074-01-1997

074-01-1997

Species: Probable female Anhinga

Observer: August Mirabella

1443 Wheaton Ln.

N. Wales, Pa. 19454

Date: 5/6/97 Location: Upper Gwynedd Twp., Montgomery Co.

Conditions: Bright sun. Seen with sun at my back.

Distance: Approx. 50-75 yards away and approx. 50 yards high.

The observation occurred all too quickly as the bird flew from north to south against a blue sky in bright sun. First seen naked eye, my split second reaction was very strange crow since all I was seeing was the black body. The light head and neck were lost initially against the blue sky. I got my binoculars (Zeiss 7x42B) on it in time to get a side view as it passed by and followed it out of sight. With the bins., I then saw the uniformly light buffy tan head and neck contrasting sharply with the very solid black body. The change from tan to black body was sharply defined. This was unlike the dirty white neck and breast of the sub-adult D.C. Cormorant which generally blends into the darker belly rather than having a sharply defined change. The neck and head were not as bulky as a Cormorant and flight seemed lighter or looser than a Cormorant. After digesting the above details all in just a few seconds, my luck ran out as I then was getting only a tail end view so that I did not see any other details. The fact that the bird was going south is another possible clue. I occasionally see D. C. Cormorants going over at this location but they are always going north in the spring. There are no large ponds or lakes nearby that have Cormorants travelling back and forth. This bird was probably going back south after overshooting to the north.

The above details are probably inadequate for confirming this species, but as I was told recently in another situation, "trust my gray hair and years of experience." I confess I can't be 100% sure since I didn't see more details in the brief time, but everything I did see told me it was a female Anhinga and I believe it was. I submit this for "the record" even if not a "positive" sighting.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga)

Date of Sighting: 6 May 1997 to 6 May 1997

Location: UPPER GWYNEDD TWP

County: MONTGOMERY

Observer(s): August Mirabella

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: August Mirabella

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

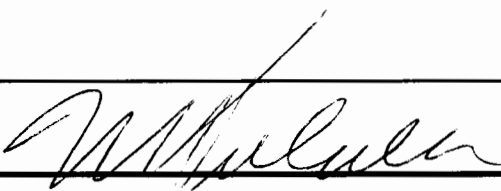
Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas						X		
P. Schwalbe						X		
K. Parkes								X
R. Ickes						X		
P. Hess						X		
J. McWilliams				X				
T. Floyd				X				
TOTALS				2		4		1
DECISION						X		

Comments: 0/6/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

6/26/00