

074-02-2003

Anhinga

Sighting Date: 28 April 2003

Location: Reading, Pa, Berks Co., (5th and Laurel Streets)

Time: 11:30

Duration of sighting: 8 minutes

Optics: Minot 8 x 32

Weather: Clear, sunny, no clouds, Temp. high-60's F, calm.

I was at work and had just stepped outside for a quick break, sitting on the step looking west at the sky. I first saw the bird flying south over the Schuylkill River at a distance of 300 meters and at first glance (without binoculars) thought it was a Cooper's Hawk, by the flap and glide flight pattern. Continuing to watch the bird I thought something was odd about the way it was flying, with more steady flapping and also that it was too large for an accipiter or Red-shouldered Hawk. It started to circle and since it appeared that it would remain in view, I went to my car and got a pair of binoculars; keeping the bird in sight during this time.

First look at the bird with binoculars, the bird was in profile to me and I thought I saw pale brown head or neck, and at first thought, the shape of a cormorant. The bird continued to circle, slowly gaining altitude and coming closer to me as well. Something about the flight kept me watching the bird, since I'd seen plenty of cormorants and this was not acting like one I'd even seen. After a couple of minutes the bird had gained one to two hundred meters in altitude and had also moved directly over me, allowing viewing from below. The long thin, evenly rounded tail and straight neck were the first characteristics noticed. The bird was too high to see the bill clearly and the neck seemed to just come to a point. The wings were long, with a straight leading edge, a bow in the rear center from the flight feathers, and a sharp point. I thought I saw a light edge to the tail, but the sun was above the bird and can not say for sure.

The bird continued to circle, all the while flapping, with short glides, and gaining altitude. It gained enough height to be difficult to see without binoculars and then glided south, southeast in the direction of the Schuylkill River south of Reading.

I looked at a field guide after the bird disappeared and all the described characteristics fit those of an Anhinga; shape, size, and flight style. I've seen Anhinga on four birding trips to Florida and cormorants plenty of times and feel confident in being able to distinguish between the families.

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Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round ~~Two~~^{ONE}

Species: Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga)

Date of Sighting: 28 April 2003 to 28 April 2003

Location: READING

County : BERKS

Observer(s): Peter Saenger

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: Peter Saenger

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Armistead			X					
D. Heathcote			X					
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman				X				
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

5/7/04