

August 26, 2005

Devich Farbotnik

Thank you for submitting all the documentation for 2004. There were 4 reports which were not accepted. These are a Thayer's Gull on 14 December, a California Gull on 27 October, a Sharp-tailed Sparrow on 9 October, and a Pink-footed Goose on 16 November. Also the committee nearly unanimously voted to place your father's report of a White Ibis on 3 March at his farm in **Class IV-B**: A record for which there exists insufficient evidence for evaluation, simply because the description of the call note was all that really clinched the bird and no-one felt the description was diagnostic.

Of these, the Goose and the Sharp-tailed Sparrow were simply not clear enough on the video to be identified. The Sparrow is obviously a Sharp-tailed and will be accepted as that, but no-one could tell from the video if it was a Nelson's or a Saltmarsh. The committee accepted the Thayer's 2-1, but 4 members abstained from voting, including me. In my comments I noted that I saw the bird and called it a Thayer's. The committee essentially doesn't know what to do with young Thayer's and are deferring judgement on these birds until a better understanding of where the plumage, morphological, and taxonomic limits between Kumlien's and Thayer's lie (basically passing the buck).

The California Gull was the toughest decision. Personally I am not sure I could rule out a large (most likely female) Ring-billed Gull. First year Ring-billed Gulls can look very like California Gull and have a similar molt pattern, the range of variation between juvs and 1st winters can match the range of variation in 2nd cycle California Gulls. Some Ring-bills will retain juvenile wing coverts through the first winter, and some will lose almost all coverts and look more like a 2nd yr bird. Also the bill on the bird looked, pink-based in the video which would suggest a Ring-billed since California Gulls should lose the pink base in the first year, and have a yellower bill base. Basically everyone felt that a clearer look to reveal the fine plumage features was needed, and that eye-color alone was not enough to clinch the ID.

Thanks again for sending in all the documentation.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

093-02-2005

July 2, 2003

White Ibis?

I wasn't even going to report this sighting. Too short a viewing and too distant. But, after much wheedling by my son, Devich, I'm giving in.

In the early afternoon of March 3, 2003 while watching the bird activity at my feeders, I heard a call from somewhere above. It was different, something I wasn't familiar with. I wasn't able to get on the bird till after the third call. By now, it was about 400 feet away and 300 feet high, straight-lining north eastward. The bird appeared to be all white (white-white) except for the tips of the wings. At the end of each wing was a black, fist-size, round-cornered rectangle. The wings were broad and unbent (unlike gulls') and were rounded, not pointed like gulls'. The size of the bird? Difficult to judge at that distance, but bigger than a crow (I guess). Puzzling to me: I did not see extended legs or neck on this bird. But maybe, because, by the time I spotted it, it was so far away and leveling off.

The one thing that could nail this one down was the call. On my mandolin 'C' above open 'A' approximates the pitch. (Same on a violin.) A feeble attempt at mimicking would be voicing a slightly nasalized 'ěh' or 'äh' for about a second, and repeating about every 8 seconds.

I am not counting this one unless the call is significant.

S. Farbotnik

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: White Ibis (Eudocimus albus)

Date of Sighting: 3 March 2003 to 3 March 2003

Location: REVERE

County : BUCKS

Observer(s): Steve Farbotnik

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: Steve Farbotnik

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 <i>RW. IT/INT</i>					X			
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris					X			
J. Stanley					X			
E. Witmer					X			
R. Leberman					X			
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS				2	5			
DECISION					X			

Comments: *0/7*

Signature (Secretary)

Date:

3/1/05