

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2020-03-04 15:51:33
Observer's Name	Michael Rosengarten
E-mail	mcrosengarten@gmail.com
Phone	610-299-3606
Observer's Address	904 Bismark Way King of Prussia PA 19406 United States
Names of additional observers	Bo Hopkins
Species (Common Name)	Crested Caracara
Species (Scientific Name)	Caracara cheriway
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Unknown
Observation Date and Time	02-27-2020 10:30 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	EBird.org/checklist/S65431398
County	Montgomery
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Collegeville
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Evansburg State Park
GPS coordinates of sighting	N 40.2000216, W -75.4040673
Habitat	Woodland habitat
Distance to bird	50 to 80 yards as it flew away from us
Viewing conditions	Very clear but windy and cold
Optical equipment used	Swarovski 8x32 EL and Bo had Swarovski slc 10x42

Description	Large dark raptor, long dark plank shaped wings with bright white patches on outer primaries with noticeable darker “fingers”. Light whitish under head and throat although this detail is not as clear to me as the other field marks as we talked about it. Tail fairly long, all bright white except for darker terminal band. Too small to be an eagle or vulture and everything about this bird screamed Caracara to me.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	I noticed this bird flying to our left and said “look at this bird” to Bo. We both were on it for maybe 15-20 seconds as it flew, constantly flapping north/Northeast away from us. Bo thought at first maybe Bald Eagle and I immediately said it’s a Caracara. We ruled out eagle due to size as it wasn’t large enough. The bird was very dark except for very bright outer wing patches which could be seen top and bottom as it flapped. Wings were plank shaped like Bald Eagle and the outer primary “fingers” looked darker than the bright white patches. . Tail appeared fairly long and all white except for a darker terminal band. I noticed white under head and throat but it was moving away fast and was mostly looking at wing, body and tail. It was followed by a vulture which was on the same path. I was so sure of the identification that I called three friends to see if they’re were in the area. I also called Brian Henderson the Montgomery Co eBird reviewer who lives in the area and gave him a heads up. We searched the area for some time with no luck. A friend went there a day later with no luck. I also tried again a couple days later with no luck. We both talked it over and I was positive about the ID but I did not get a photo and we decided not to eBird it and wait a few days in case it was re found. A Caracara was found today in Vermont so Bo and I decided to document our sighting for the record.
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	After it disappeared we discussed field marks at length. We debated alternatives (Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle, both ruled out by size, shape and color. Other hawks failed due to the large bright white wing patches and white tail. Black Vulture by tail size and color and wings much to white.
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	Unfortunately I had a camera but didn’t have time to get a photo. I was positive from the start on the ID but just felt reporting it without the photo would be a tough argument for our area and the rarity. I told all the people I called about it that day that if one showed up anywhere near by I would fill out a report. Today I saw that one was photographed in Vermont.
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	I have seen quite a few Caracaras in Florida as well as NJ and Delaware. The dark plank shaped wings with the large white patches and the all white tail with darker terminal band were unmistakable. At the time I didn’t look at the head as much as the rest but recalled to Bo that it was light colored underneath.
During	Sibley
After	Sibley
Click to edit	PORC-webform00153