

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

31 January 2002

Don Bryant  
c/o Greg Grove  
RD 1 Box 483  
Petersburg, PA 16669

Dear Don,

Thank you for submitting documentation through Greg Grove of the Gyrfalcon at Stone Mountain Hawk Watch on 7 December 1999. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it is unable to accept this record.

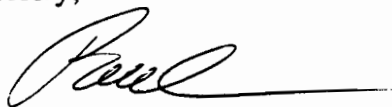
The vote was two in favor and five not in favor of acceptance. Most of those who declined to accept it were concerned about the description of "uniformly dirty white in appearance," which raised the possibility of a leucistic individual of another species. Albinistic birds of this sort are well known among raptors.

The record was placed in the Committee's Class IV-A: "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt."

The Committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not imply that the bird was not a Gyrfalcon, but simply that a majority of members believe that the documentation did not support this species conclusively.

We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting reports on any future rarities.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:  
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record No. 200-02-1999

200-02 1999

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: GYRFALCON Date of this Observation: Dec 7, 1999

Date Found: Dec 7, 1999 Last Date Seen: Dec 7, 1999

Location: Stone Mt Hawk Watch

Township/City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: Huntingdon / Mifflin line

Person Writing this report: Greg Grove on behalf of Don Bryant

Address: G. Grove address: RDi Box 483 Petersburg Pa 16669

Phone: 814 667 2305

Other Observers: None

Who found the bird first: Don Bryant

Other documentation Included: (Circle all appropriate items)(Make sure all attached items are fully labeled)

Photograph

Audio Recording

Video Recording

If a Specimen, where is it stored? \_\_\_\_\_

Description: (Attach additional pages as needed —Please do not write on back of this form)

attached is description written  
by Don Bryant on Dec 7, 1999  
within a few hours after  
sighting

200-02-1999

[I had a] gyrfalcon at 2:34 today. It was a white-morph, and there was absolutely no doubt about it. I knew the bird was a falcon from the moment that I spotted it--it came up from the Stone Valley side, a bit down ridge, and was in soar mode when I first saw it. It was immediately obvious that it was a large falcon, nearly red-tail sized, but I could not see much on that side concerning color. The bird crossed to the Big Valley side down-ridge and then flew down the Big Valley side at a pretty decent distance from the ridge. However, I had at least 3 minutes to watch this bird.

In flight, it flapped constantly and rather powerfully. In glide mode, it had the obvious swept-back winged appearance of a peregrine. However, it also did some occasional soaring, and one of the soars was in a shaft of sunlight. That gave me an excellent view of the coloration of the bird. The bird was uniformly dirty white in appearance--in sun rather white, really--and that left little doubt about what it was. The underwings appeared a bit darker to me, but that could have been the light (there wasn't a lot of light at the point where I could see the underwing. It was too light to be a peregrine, and didn't really have the flight behavior quite of a peregrine either. The wings looked a bit blunter at the tips than a peregrine to me, as they should have.

The books say that goshawks can be mistaken for gyrfalcons by their flight behavior, but this very obviously not a goshawk. Tail was much too stubby and the coloration was completely wrong. I would think that you could only mistake a grey-morph or dark-morph bird, and the wing shape of this bird was very obviously falcon-tapered and not broad like that of a goshawk.

Binoculars: 10 x 50 Swarovski

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Ballot - Round One**

Species: Gyrfalcon (Falco rusticolis )

Date of Sighting: 7 December 1999 to 7 December 1999

Location: HUNTINGDON/MIFFLIN

County: STONE MT. HAWK WATCH

Observer(s): Don Bryant

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Greg Grove

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

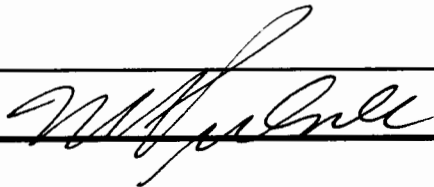
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Recording: No			Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead				X				
D. Couchman				X				
P. Hess						X		
R. Ickes			X					
M. Sharp				X				
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			2	4		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments: 2/5

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 3/12/01