

March 13, 2005

Al Spiese
4086 Old Orchard Rd.
York PA 17402

This is a particularly intriguing and enticing report of an extremely rare vagrant to the state. Unfortunately the review of the documentation resulted in a vote of 3 to 4 not to accept the record. The main points reviewers cited as being problematic were as follows.

1. There was no description of the overall size and build of the bird, or a direct comparison to another species such as Killdeer which was also present. Not to suggest that you made such a mistake, but without a direct size comparison some reviewers felt that it was not possible to rule out Semipalmated Plover.
2. One erroneous point was that August was late for a juvenile Killdeer. August is too late for the appearance of most juvenile Killdeers but considering the possibility of a second brood, or a late nesting attempt, it is certainly not out of the realm of possibility.
3. You described the breast band as black but did not see any black on the head. For a male Wilson's it would be somewhat odd for the breast band to remain black while the head had molted into the winter brown.
4. Finally there is no description of the rear third of the bird. For a species as rare as Wilson's Plover, a description of the whole bird is needed.

It commendable that you attempted to get photographs, and hopefully you can appreciate that even though the committee did not accept the record it is not a vote of no confidence in the identification but rather a recognition of the incompleteness of the documentation. Many thanks for allowing the committee to archive your report.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

258-01-2002

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: Wilson's Plover Date of this Observation: Aug 15, 2002

Date Found: Same Last Date Seen: Same

Location: Mouth of Conewago Creek at Susquehanna River

Township/City: East Manchester County: York

Person Writing this report: Al Spiese

Address: 4086 Old Orchard Rd.

York, PA. 17402 Phone: 717.558.2029

Other Observers: _____

Who found the bird first: _____

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)

The Conewago Creek is the boundary line for the Twp. To the north is York Haven electric power plant and a short distance to the south is Brunner's Island electric power plant. This has always been a good gathering spot for long legged waders down to the smallest peeps especially when the water is low - it's down to a trickle now.

On this day there were 16 Semipalmated Sandpipers plus 2 Least Sandpipers, 12 Killdeer, 6 Green Heron, 6 Yellow-Crowned Night-Heron, 1 Little Blue Heron, 2 Great Egrets and 3 Great Blue Herons.

The Wilson's Plover was standing in a fixed position, a little back from the water in a sandy and rocky area.

The bill was black and heavy and a black area extended from the eye to the bill. The thing that stood out most was a wide breast band that became wider as it extended toward the sides where it ended. The throat and upper breast were white as far back as I could see. The head and back were a uniform sandy color. I didn't see any black on the head. The legs and feet were a sort of pinkish color.

I concluded that this was an adult male Wilson's Plover. I didn't attempt to make it fly. When I returned later hoping to get some pictures it disappeared. This area is a favorite for boat launchings and evidence showed that such happenings

had taken place.

On the 16th after much searching no evidence of the Plover could be found.

Other possibilities - Juv. Killdeer - one breast band but it extends around the sides of the neck. Bill is black but not nearly as heavy. For that species an Aug. date is eliminated.
A one banded Killdeer.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

Date of Sighting: 15 August 2002 to 15 August 2002

Location: MOUTH OF CONEWAGO CREEK at SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

County: YORK

Observer(s): Al Speise

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Al Speise

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Hess					X			
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer				X				
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			3	3	1			
DECISION				X				

Comments: 3/4

Signature (Secretary):

Date: 1/12/03