



269-01-1991

PORC

Species: American Avocet

Reporter: Steve Santner
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Date: July 20, 1991. Written up Aug 6, 1991 from notes made mostly at the scene but added to slightly on the evening of July 20.

Location: Presque Isle SP, Erie Co, Pa.

Habitat: Sandy shoreline at Gull Point, at the tip of the peninsula extending into Lake Erie.

Sighting Conditions: Seen perched from 75-100 ft through Bushnell and Questar telescopes and in flight through 9X binoculars. Total sighting time was about 5 min perched and 1-2 min in flight. Lighting was excellent.

Other observers: Frank and Barb Haas and Deuane Hoffman.

At about 12:35 PM on ~~Aug 6~~^{20 July} the four of us were waiting at Gull Point, hoping that a Piping Plover might show up that day. Deuane was doing a "big year" for the state and the Haas' and I just wanted to see this species in the state before it disappears entirely. We had been at this location for over five hours, the temperature was 90+ in the shade (and there was no shade) and very few birds had been moving through on the light breeze. There was a flock of gulls (plus a Caspian Tern or two) along the shoreline which had been sorted over several times by all of us. Two Short-billed Dowitchers had been there all morning, as well as a few peep (Least and Semipalmated), both yellowlegs, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plover. Suddenly, Frank yelled "Avocet", "Avocet"! He had sorted through those gulls one more time and the avocet had somehow slipped in. Within seconds, I also had my scope on the bird. We all had excellent looks at the avocet, after which Frank moved in to photograph it. Unlike many shorebirds, identification of this bird was easy; it was an adult female in full breeding plumage. The bird was strikingly black and white with an orange head and neck, a long, strongly upturned bill and very long grayish-blue legs. The white eye-ring and white at the base of the bill were seen. The underparts were white except for the throat, which was orange. The wings were black with a large white patch. The bird was studied for about 5 min (just long enough to get

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photographs) before a fisherman in a boat came close enough to flush the bird. In flight, few additional marks were noted except that it did have a white rump and tail and the wings were seen to be strongly patterned with black and white. In flight the bird called, somewhat Lesser Yellowlegs-like but repeated many times. It was followed in flight for some time, initially circling about as if it intended to return but ultimately it was lost as it flew east along the shoreline of Lake Erie. We remained at Gull Point for a while (30-45 min) but the bird did not return.

Elimination of similar species: There are none!

Experience with this species: 20 years.

Record No.: 269-01-1991

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **American Avocet**

Date of Sighting: **20 July 1991**

Observer(s): **Steve Santner, Frank Haas**

Date of Submission: **1991 Erie**

Submitted by: **Steve Santner, Frank Haas**

| Member | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV | Class V | | |
|---------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---|---|
| | | | | | A | B | C |
| E. Kwater | X | | | | | | |
| B. Haas | X | | | | | | |
| F. Haas | X | | | | | | |
| R. Leberman | X | | | | | | |
| G. McWilliams | X | | | | | | |
| S. Santner | X | | | | | | |
| P. Schwalbe | X | | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 7 | | | | | | |
| DECISION | X | | | | | | |

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Frank Haas

Date:

3/7/92