



269-01-1994

10/18/94

Barb Dean

Dear Barb and Frank

321 E. Meyer Ave
New Castle, Pa. 16105

Handle photos and avocet record
then to P.O.R.C. Thanks

Avocet at Lake Wilhelm - Mercer Co. - Sandy
Lake Township.

My husband and I drove into launch area No. 1 at Lake Wilhelm at approximately 6:50 PM August 14, 1994. An avocet was standing on the wooden boat launch. It was facing west and looking out over the water.

The bird was about the size of a ring-billed gull. (I am referring to body size.) I viewed the bird from 50 feet away to perhaps 25 feet away. The bill was long and thin. It was also black and perhaps 4" in length. The bill was upturned at the tip. The head and long neck was a pale rust color with some pale grey mixed in. I have enclosed 3 photographs and I must comment that the colors in the photographs are more exaggerated. The bird was paler in color than the photos suggest. The beautiful black and white pattern on the wings help I.D. the bird. The under side of the bird (belly flanks rump) were white. (a warm white due to the setting sun.) It doesn't show in the photograph but the bird had a white eye ring. The avocet stood on the wooden boat launch with its webbed feet barely covered with water. The legs looked medium to dark grey. ^(Very long) The bird never fed but did call. It gave out 10 calls. The call was loud and sounding one note calls — one after the other. Wheet! Occasionally the bird would stretch its neck and head up and down repeating this 3 or 4 times.

A young couple was cooking supper about

20 feet away from the bird and the bird did not seem disturbed by them. A great blue heron stood east of the avocet about 25 feet away in the water.

I remember looking down at my camera to see how much film I had left when my husband yelled that the bird was flying off. My husband had been standing at a picnic table about 50 feet away where I had left my binoculars and camera equipment.

When I looked up, all I could see was a blinding ^{white} flash of light. The bird circled and headed south east.

My total estimate of time was 15 minutes. (20 at most) I didn't use binoculars but I used a minolta 7000 mappum camera S.L.R. with a fixed sigma 400 mm. lens. The film in the camera was 200 speed Kodachrome print and pictures were handheld at about 20 feet away.

We checked all other boat launches (some in darkness) but no bird. We checked again at dawn and also went to the Shenango mud flats area but it was flooded. We couldn't get in.

It is important to note that we had a violent rain storm in Lawrence Co. the previous evening and all through the night until about noon on Aug. 14. From the look of flooding in Venango, Lawrence and Mercer Cos. I am guessing the bird was forced down due to the storm.

No need to return the photo's.

Please forward to P.O.R.C.

Barb Dean

P.S. The bird also gave out 4 calls right before it flew off.

I have only seen one other avocet at the Atlantic Shore

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **American Avocet** (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Date of Sighting: **14 August 1994 to 14 August 1994**

Location: **LAKE WILHELM**

County: **MERCER**

Observer(s): **Barb Dean**

Date of Submission: **1994**

Submitted by: **Barb Dean**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **YES** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
N. Pulcinella	X							
E. Kwater	X							
R. Ickes	X							
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe	X							
J. Skinner	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

3-31-95