

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

2469 Hammertown Road

Narvon, PA 17555

September 24, 1997

Chris Smull
310 Church Street
Danville, PA 17821-1912

Dear Chris,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Willets you saw at Montour Preserve on 28 April 1995 to P.O.R.C. This report circulated through the committee for two rounds and after careful review, we regret that we are unable to accept these records. There was concern within the committee that the descriptions submitted did not contain enough detail to allow for a fair assessment.

This of course, does not mean the birds were not Willets, merely, that the record is not beyond reasonable doubt for acceptance

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record #278-03-1995

278-03-1995

8/30/95

Dear Barb:

Recently Dan Brauning asked me to submit my observations about the willets to you, and not to refer to field guides or anything similar when making the description.

I thought it might be best to send you a copy of my field notes of 4/28/95⁵ the day I observed these birds. Now it's a matter of trying to remember what I wrote before & after checking the field guide.

To the best of my recollection much of 4/28/95 page was written without a field guide or anything similar. Some comments come to my mind as follows:

1. I believe in saying I wrote "or larger?" after I had checked my field guide and thought the birds looked good for willets.
2. Sometime a spotted sandpiper appeared nearby I used that to aid in saying.
3. "white around eyes": there seemed to be some white in the area of the eyes & I spent quite a bit of time figuring it out & trying to express it. I can't remember what I crossed out. It seems to me now that the "white around eyes" was not a significant point.
4. beak color: the beaks looked black no matter how close I got to the birds. I believe looks refer to it as ~~black~~ blue or something like that.

OVER

5. I was fascinated by the broad white streaks on the wings (bands maybe is the better word) and watched the birds to study them more carefully. One I saw seemed to end (see sketch) on the trailing edge of the wing before it got to the base of the wing. It seemed to fit what I saw later in a book.

6. About Terres: I read about willets in Terres after getting home. As I remember it he said willets nod but not as often as some other bird(s). I can't remember the name(s). It brought to my mind that I had seen one nod.

To the best of my memory the rest of the description was before referring to the field guide.

I stopped at the Preserve office & told Jon Beam, the naturalist who was just about to give a lecture. Said he would check when he could. Later he told me when he went to the lake the birds were in the location I described and spotted sandpiper was there also.

I was glad Jon Beam saw the birds, because while I felt strongly they were willets, not knowing the bird, I hesitated to ~~blatantly~~ say for sure. I reported it to Don Brauning that way.

I did not know that willets were so uncommon in the area & thought that they were probably listed in Allan Schweinsberg's book, but they aren't.

4/28/95

✓ 1 purple martin - D. Lake Rd, Amelio farm Jerry Turn

✓ 1 d. c. cormorant - FAB

✓ 1 spotted sandpiper - MPL

✓ 2 a. coots - FAB

✓ 4 buffleheads - MPL

incident - 6 shore birds, in water of MPL - standing in a few inches of water

nearby
spotted sand-
looked
dwarf compared
to incident
bird

10-12" or larger? (~~spotted sand-~~ ~~spiper~~ ~~near~~ ~~it~~ ~~looked~~ ~~about~~ ~~half~~ ~~length~~ ~~of~~ ~~unknown~~ ~~bird~~ /
gray-brown back ± barring at sides & on wings
undersides lighter than above parts

white around eyes & ~~black~~

bill long but not real long - black for wicket

belly area white

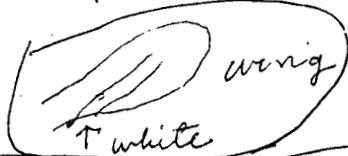
could see a little black coloring in tail area - ~~as part of wing~~ ^{apparently ~~from~~}

looked more brownish ± better light & as I got closer)

legs gray

allows you to get close but will flash wings when you do. The wings were a spectacular black with broad white streaks. The white streaks go down to the wing edges (on back?). Rump white.

mainly inactives but did feed a little occasionally.



Terres says they are colonial and saw one rook once

Jon Beam
is Preserve
naturalist

a few days later Jon Beam called & said he saw the 6 shore birds & they were wickets.

Said he is acquainted with them. Said he had tried to reach me earlier but couldn't.

LOOKS GOOD FOR

WILGETS - Tell

John Beam re
4/28 & Braung's
wife on 4/29

X 4/29/95 - no sign of suspected willets on MPL. Quite a few fishermen about

✓ 2 purple martins - Amish house on Brecht Rd - Perry Township

✓ 1 ring-billed gull - MPL

✓ 1 spotted sandpiper - MPL

✓ 1 catbird - MP

✓ 1 white-crowned sparrow - MP

✓ 1 d. c. cormorant - MPL

2 ospreys - flying over MPL. Saw one plunge into water - as soon as it came up out of water the other osprey flew at it (the bird which plunged). It flew at it in ~~the~~ what looked like the head area. The bird which plunged then started flying fast around lake area being pursued by other osprey. After a short time following bird stopped following. Very soon the plunging bird left lake area & head for some nearby high trees. Immediately the other osprey started pursuing it. Last I saw of them they were flying around over the trees. I would not see whether the plunging bird caught something or not, but it seems likely to me it had a catch.

£

✓ 1 yellow warbler - MP

✓ 1 c. yellowthroat - Gardner rd near bridge & RR tracks.

✓ 1 meadowlark - near same area as above - Gardner Rd

✓ 1 Savannah sparrow " " " " - Gardner Rd

Limestone
TWN

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 2 of 2

Species: Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

Date of Sighting: 28 April 1995 to 28 April 1995

Location: MONTOUR PRESERVE

County: MONTOUR

Observer(s): Chris Smull

Date of Submission: 1995

Submitted by: Chris Smull

Written Description: YES Photo: NO 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					
S. Feldstein						X		
TOTALS			5	1		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

J C Haas

Date:

2-22-97

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

Date of Sighting: 28 April 1995 to 28 April 1995

Location: MONTOUR PRESERVE

County: MONTOUR

Observer(s): Chris Smull

Date of Submission: 1995

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Written Description: YES Photo: NO Specimen: NO

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F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams				X				
P. Schwalbe			X					
S. Feldstein						X		
TOTALS			5	1		1		
DECISION								

Comments: Send for second Round.

Signature (Secretary): *J. C. Haas*

Date: 5-1-96