

UNUSUAL SIGHTING DOCUMENTATION

Person Submitting: August Mirabella
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313-012002

Species: Purple Sandpiper

Observers: Found by: Cameron Rutt

Seen Later by: A. Mirabella, Judy Mirabella and many others

Date Seen: 11/16/02 **Time:** All day

Where Seen: Peace Valley Park, Bucks Co.

Conditions: The bird was viewed with 7x42 Zeiss Binoculars and Leica APO77 Zoom Scope. It was cloudy with periods of rain. It was seen as close as 25 ft.

Behavior & Habitat: The shoreline at PVP has been "stabilized" by large rocks in places and the base of the dam also has large rocks. The water level was low enough that some mud/gravel lake bottom was exposed along the shore. The bird was initially found on exposed mud where no rocks existed and returned to that area later in the afternoon. In between, it spent a lot of time on the edge adjacent to rocks and on the large rocks at the base of the dam. Although it did pick at the ground on occasion, it appeared to mainly just sit and rest.

Description: It was larger than the peep sandpipers. In the poor lighting, the bird appeared very dark gray above with a mostly dark breast. The breast was heavily streaked with a well-defined break with the belly and sides, which were less heavily but still heavily streaked so that white background was visible. The streaking thinned toward the lower belly and flanks and the undertail coverts were even whiter. The bill was long and decurved, black at the end, and increasingly orange from about the mid-point to the base. The legs were orange. The wing coverts showed white feather edging which we thought meant it was a juvenile that had not changed completely to adult winter plumage. When it flew, it had considerable white on the underwings.

Distinction from Similar Species: Of the similar sized shorebirds, the Rock S. would be the most similar but apparently its bill & legs are more yellow than orange. The breast and back would show more buff in juveniles and the adult would be less heavily streaked below. Its short stubby bill can eliminate the Surfbird quickly. Short straight bills also eliminate the Ruddy & Black Turnstones. Pectoral S. & Sharp-tailed S. would have paler, scaly upperparts, white belly and flanks, more yellow tones to legs, and straighter bills among other things.

Previous Experience: Have seen yearly at the NJ coast for 30+ years.

References during ID: Sibley Guide to Birds

References after ID: Sibley Guide to Birds & my videotape

Other Documentation: Videotape submitted with this report by A. Mirabella

Date of report: 12/16/02

Signature of Observer: August Mirabella

August Mirabella

Showers to heavy Rain
wind ENE 10-15 w/ gusts
Low NW water moving up the coast

NOVEMBER

16

PURPLE SANDPIPER - Peace Valley Park, Bucks Co, PA
- Dark medium sized, chunky shorebird
feeding along rocky shoreline of Lake Galena

Upperpart - overall all dark grayish. Darkest on head,
face & rump. Back & wings lighter gray.

Underpart - throat dark gray. Upper breast gray, belly
dusky white. Flanks with heavy, coarse dark
streaking, same on belly.

Bill - medium sized slight down curve & heavier at base
than at the tip. The bill was dark $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way
from the tip. The base of the bill was a dusky
orange.

Legs were short and a dark orange.

voice - non-head

Behaviour - The bird amongst rocks & pebbles along the
shoreline by walking slowly & deliberately stopping &
probing. Occasionally when people were near it moved
a little quicker. I did see the bird fly.

Weather overcast with intermittent to steady to
heavy rain. Temps 40's wind ENE 10-15 with
gusting.

other birds seen - RTLO (1), Least bit Gull (3)

Least bit Longspur (1) - flushed from rocks along the
shoreline.

AFI-GLANCE®

313-01-2002

Nick Pulcinella



PURPLE Sandpiper 11/16/02
Peace Valley Park, Bucks co
Bill Graham 313-01-2002

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Purple Sandpiper (Calidris maritima)

Date of Sighting: 16 November 2002 to 16 November 2002

Location: PEACE VALLEY PARK

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Cameron Rutt and multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: August Mirabella, Devich Farbotnik, Bill Graham

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
<i>R. Wilcox</i>								
G. Armistead	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
B. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: *[Signature]*

Signature (Secretary): Date:

[Signature] 2/20/02