

320-01-1991

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**

*Tryngites subruficollis*

**Mercer County**

**Ted Floyd**

I saw a juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*) at the Shenango River Reservoir in Mercer County at 12:30 P.M. on Saturday 31 August 1991. This bird is classified as a "rarity" in Pennsylvania, except in Erie County (Kwater 1990).

The bird was in the large grassy shore line of the southwestern section of the reservoir. I observed it for more than 30 minutes, and several times I approached to within 30 meters. Other birds present included 16 Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), which behaved aggressively toward the Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper was generally inactive, except when chased by Killdeer or approached too closely by me. During such instances the bird flew around erratically for up to 1 minute, but it never left the grassy shore line. It never called.

At rest, the bird was noticeably smaller than near-by Killdeer. The feathers of the upperparts were black with pale edges. The underparts were pale and unpatterned. The face, neck, and breast were pale yellow, while the belly and undertail coverts were whitish. The bird's small head and long neck conveyed a pigeon-like profile. Its stocky bill was completely black. Its big black eye was prominent against its pale facial feathers. The legs were yellow, and the tail was short. In flight, the bird's unmarked white underwings contrasted sharply with the dark upperparts. No markings (e.g., wing stripes) were evident on the upperwings.

At the time of the sighting, weather conditions were as follows: skies mostly sunny; temperature 30° C; winds calm. I observed the bird with 8.5 X 44 binoculars and a 20X telescope. Richard Floyd and Humberto Teixeira also observed the bird.

When water levels are low, the western edge of Shenango River Reservoir provides abundant cover for shorebirds and grasspipers. Other birds seen during my brief visit of 31 August 1991 included 122 Pectoral Sandpipers (*Calidris melanotos*) and a Lesser Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*). There were 666 shorebirds in all. I observed similar numbers during the summer of 1988, when water levels also were low. As these numbers are among the highest typically

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recorded in the commonwealth, this poorly known site  
deserves intensive study during years of low water levels.

Literature cited:

Kwater, E. 1990. Official list of the birds of Pennsylvania.  
*Pennsylvania Birds* 4:51-53.

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of 1

Species: Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Date of Sighting: 31 August 1991

Observer(s): Ted Floyd

Date of Submission: 1991

Submitted by: Ted Floyd

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):

*B. Haas*

Date:

*3/7/92*