

330-02-1993

320-01-1993

RED NECKED PHALAROPE AND BUFF BREASTED SANDPIPER — Shenango Reservoir, Mercer County

Mike Fialkovich

On 28 August, 1993, Walt Shaffer and I were shorebirding at Presque Isle and Pymatuning. It was a slow day, numbers and variety were low, so we decided to try our luck at Shenango.

We were encouraged when we arrived. The water level was very low and the mudflats extensive. We were hoping for something unusual, but couldn't locate anything.

On the way back to the car, I stopped to look at an unfamiliar plant. Walt decided to check a small pool in the distance while he waited for me. Soon he called me and I lost interest in that plant.

He had a Red Necked Phalarope (Phalaropus lobatus) feeding in the small pool. We couldn't believe our luck, what a find for the day!

Characteristics of the Phalarope: dark above (crown, rear of neck, back and wings), white below, on face, forehead and foreneck. Dark marks covering each eye which turned slightly downward behind the eye. Buffy streaks on back and scapulars. Bill thin, medium length, black. At very close range, a faint buffy area on the lower side of the neck. Did not spin while feeding, but swam rapidly while picking at the surface of the water. Very active.

A Red Phalarope does not have streaks on the back. It has a shorter, stouter bill, and is pearly gray above, not dark like the red necked. Red Phalaropes migrate through Western Pennsylvania from about mid October to mid November.

Walt ran to the car to get his camera, while I watched the bird. I began to scan the surrounding area and saw a Buff Breasted Sandpiper (Tryngites subruficollis) walking in a drier area of the mudflat. From a distance, I could easily see the buffy color and plain face with a large black eye.

Characteristics of the Buff Breasted Sandpiper: Plain buff face, breast, sides and belly. Back and wings dark brown to black with buff edges to the feathers. Crown buff with dark markings forming a faint cap. The legs were yellow, bill dark and small. Large looking black eye isolated on plain buff face. Fed on dry areas where low herbaceous vegetation grew. Did not feed in or near water.

Walt and I were able to get within approximately 20 feet of both birds, obtaining photographs. The birds were very cooperative, so we could study them closely. We observed them for 2 hours.

After an uneventful morning, this became a great day of shorebirding. You just never know . . .

References:

Hayman Peter, Marchant John, Prater Tony. 1986. Shorebirds An Identification Guide. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Stull Jean, Stull James A., McWilliams Gerald M. 1985. Birds Of Erie County Including Presque Isle. Allegheny Press, Elgin Pennsylvania, p. 93.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*)

Date of Sighting: 28 August 1993 to 28 August 1993

Location: SHENANGO RESERVOIR

County: MERCER

Observer(s): Mike Fialkovich

Date of Submission: 1993

Submitted by: Mike Fialkovich

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:

9-25-94