

**PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE**  
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

12 February 2002

Peter Robinson  
P.O. Box 482  
Hanover, PA 17331

Dear Peter,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the following five records. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted not to accept them.

**Red-necked Phalarope, Codorus State Park, 7 September 1999:** Members' opinions were divided, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly accounts for our delay in informing you of the result). The final vote was five in favor of acceptance and two not in favor. The Committee's bylaws require a vote of 6-1 to accept a record.

The majority had no doubt about the identification, but the two dissenters felt that a written description was essential to confirm what appeared to be a relatively thin and pointed bill, plus upperparts separating the bird conclusively from a Red Phalarope molting from juv. to first winter plumage. One member was not certain whether a possible white stripe which might be half of a Red-necked "V" pattern was not actually something white on the water behind the bird.

**Little Gull, Bainbridge, 25 October 1998:** As with the phalarope, balloting went two rounds and the final vote was four favoring acceptance and three not in favor.

The three members who dissented, as well as some of those who did vote to accept it, expressed concern that while the brief description did suggest a Little Gull, the details were not quite sufficient for them to make conclusive identification.

**Chuck-will's-widow, Adams County, 8 May 1999 (John Clarke):** The vote was two in favor of acceptance and five not in favor. Those who voted against acceptance felt that without a description of the call, there was no basis for evaluating the record.

We emphasize that our non-acceptance does not mean John does not know the difference between the call of Chuck-will's-widow and a Whip-poor-will, or that he misidentified the bird. Rather it represents a majority of the Committee's opinion that the report could not be judged at all.

If you pass this decision along to John, please tell him that the Committee hopes the decision in this case does not discourage him from submitting reports of rarities in the future.

**Rufous Hummingbird, Boyertown, September-December 1998:** Balloting went two rounds, with a final vote of four in favor of acceptance and three not in favor. As I noted above, the Committee's bylaws require a minimum 6-1 vote for accepting a record.

The dissenters' opinions revolved around one issue: whether enough of the back and crown were visible to separate this adult male from an adult male Allen's of the "orange" extreme. The majority felt that enough could be seen, and the minority felt that the areas visible were not sufficient to rule out Allen's with certainty.

Several members commented that this was an excellent example of the reason why a detailed written description should always accompany photographs. It probably would have cleared up the doubts.

**Brewer's Blackbird, Presque Isle State Park, 17 October 1999:** The vote was one in favor of acceptance and six not in favor. The majority felt that the bird was most likely a Brewer's but that the brief details did not completely rule out other species, particularly female Brown-headed Cowbird.

The record was placed in the Committee's Class IV-A: "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of an observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt."

Naturally, non-acceptance does not mean that any of these bird were not identified correctly, but rather that some members felt that without an accompanying descriptions their concerns could not be resolved. We trust that these results do not discourage you from submitting reports of future rarities, and we urge all birders to include a written description even with a photograph that may appear to be diagnostic.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:  
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record Nos. 330-04-1999 (Red-necked Phalarope), 339-03-1998 (Little Gull), 463-01-1999 (Chuck-will's-widow), 495-01-1998 (Rufous Hummingbird), 861-07-1999 (Brewer's Blackbird)

339-03-1998

P. O. Box 482  
1336 Broadway  
Hanover, PA 17331  
19 March 1999

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee  
C/O Frank Haas  
2469 Hammertown Road  
Narvon, PA 17555-9726

Dear PORC:

The following belated report is based upon my own notes, made at the time of the observation, offered now in case no one else submitted documentation, or in case the additional documentation is of some benefit.

Species: Little Gull (adult, winter plumage)

Date/Time: 25 October 1998. 12 N - 1:30 PM.

Location: Lancaster County, PA. Grassy islands in Susquehanna River at Bainbridge.

Weather: 62 degrees F., clear, wind 10-15 mph.

Observer: Peter Robinson

Optics: Leica Ultra 12x50 BA binoculars

Observation: While using the binoculars to scan, I saw a small gull about 300 yards away, along the York County side of the river, with a group of Ring-billed Gulls, that had NO black on the wing tips. The bird was a plain uniform light gray color on the top of the wings. The sun was above and behind this gull, but it looked darker under the wings each time that it turned, and the nearby Ring-billed Gulls looked light under the wings. I watched this gull for several minutes as it flew upstream towards Bruner's Island.

Comments: I was out on the river, walking in hip boots around the grassy islands, looking for Sharp-tailed Sparrow, when I saw the gull. (Did not find Sharp-tailed Sparrow.)

Sincerely,

*Peter Robinson*

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

Date of Sighting: 25 October 1998 to 25 October 1998

Location: BAINBRIDGE

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Peter Robinson

Date of Submission: 1999

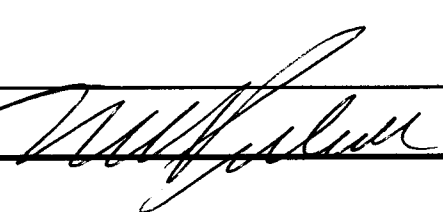
Submitted by: Peter Robinson

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES      PHOTO NO      SPECIMEN NO      RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman			X					
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes					X			
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid			X					X
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			4	1	1			2
DECISION								

Comments: 9/2/99      2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

9/28/99

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation - Round Two

Species: Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

Date of Sighting: 25 October 1998 to 25 October 1998

Location: BAINBRIDGE

County: LANCASTER

Observer(s): Peter Robinson

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Peter Robinson

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman			X					
G. Armistead					X			
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes					X			
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			4	1	2			
DECISION					X			

**Comments:** 4/3/0 - rejected

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

10/21/01