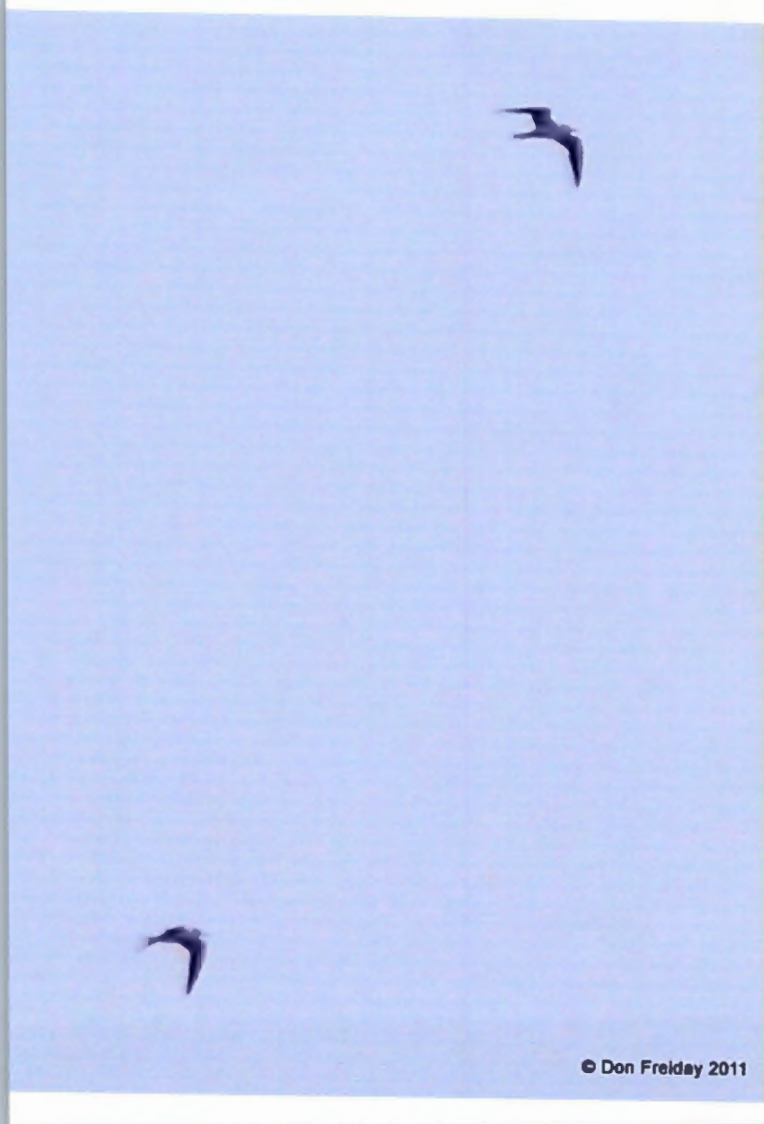




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375-01-2011

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*)

Date: August 28, 2010 morning

Location: Lake Nockamixon State Park, Bucks Co., PA

Number: 2 adults

Observer Reporting: Don Freiday 15 Park Avenue, Del Haven NJ
08251peregrine43@hotmail.com. 609.408.5755

Other Observers: Beth Ciuzio, Roger Horn, Kathy Hornover.

Habitat: lake, generally above treeline 500 + yards.

Viewing Conditions: cloudy, light rain

Optics: Zeiss 8X42FL, Swarovski ATS80HD w 20-50X eyepiece,
Nikon D7000 w 300mm F4 ED (effective 450mm)

Description: In direct comparison (same field) with Common Terns and Caspian Terns, obviously larger than Commons, smaller than Caspians. Dark to black back, white underparts except dark trailing edge to underwing and dark wingtips. Dark cap and cheek, white forehead as in a Least tern, white on forehead appeared as a patch when birds were head on, white of neck came up behind cap on neck. White on forehead did not appear to extend behind eye, but distance was great and I cannot be certain about this. Very long winged, fairly narrow winged, wings pointed. Wings angled back sharply at wrist. Tail deeply forked, forks spread wide. Did not see exact tail color pattern.

Behavior: Birds were surprisingly steady despite high winds, generally sailing into the wind on set wings with occasional stiff flaps. Almost always remained above the treeline. Fight was strong, silhouettes jaeger-like, very unlike smaller terns.

Separation From Similar Species: Separated from Bridled tern by extent of white on forehead, apparent failure of white eyebrow

to go behind eye, very dark back, and shape and flight more jaeger-like than tern like.

Discussion: Two birds remained together, were observed twice at different viewpoints with observations separated by about an hour, closest as they passed the boat launch area. Generally flew into the wind.

Previous Experience: For what its worth, I've been birding 27 years throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries, am on the NJBRC, formerly edited Records of New Jersey Birds.

Are You Positive of Identification? Yes. Although I have not seen this species before, funny enough I called them to species initially at great distance, the Sooties had a very recognizable shape and pattern that I had studied in field guides over the years. I believe the photos are diagnostic as well.

References: Sibley, Crossley

Date of Report: 09/01/2011

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*

Date of Sighting: 28 August 2011 to 28 August 2011

County : BUCKS

Location : NOCKAMIXON STATE PARK

Observer(s): Don Freiday, Beth Ciuzio, Roger Horn, Kathy Hornover

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Don Freiday

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. DeRearmus	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
B. Coulter	X							
R. Koury			X					
D. Weber				X				
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	5		1	1				
DECISION	X							

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: 4/8/12