



**Pennsylvania Rare Bird Report Form**

**Species (Common and Scientific Name):** Sooty Tern, *Onychoprion fuscata*

**Subspecies, if known**

**Number of individuals Sex(es)** one

**Age(s) and Plumage(s) (E.g. Immature; Adult in Breeding Plumage; Year for Gulls; Basic or Alternate If You Prefer Those Terms; State of Molt If Applicable):** juvenile

**Date and Time of Observation** - August 28, 2011 intermittent sightings from approx 11:30 AM to 4 PM

**Location (City, Borough, Township)** near Leesport, Berks County

**Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)** - Lake Ontelaunee dam breast, Rte 73

**Observer Reporting:**

**Name** - Katrina Knight

**Address State Zip** - PO Box 12823, Reading, PA 19612

**E-mail (Optional)** - kk1raven@gmail.com

**Phone (Optional)** - 610 372-3671

**Other Observers (Only Those Who Saw and Identified the Bird with You):** - Ken Lebo, Matt Wlasniewski, various others

**Habitat (E.g. Mowed Field, Woodland Edge, Any other details)** - large lake

**Distance to Bird (Specify feet, yards, etc.)** - across lake

**Viewing Conditions (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you)** - overcast, windy, sometimes raining although not at the time I first identified the bird

**Optical Equipment Used**

**Description (include as much detail as you observed ñ size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this**

**individual):** Using binoculars, my initial impression was of an all brown, long-winged tern noticeably bigger than the Common Terns that were also present but not as big as the Royal Terns. Once I got my telescope on it, I could see that the

leading edge of the wings was white, there was a light patch on the underside near the tail and the underwings had large patches that were pale rather than dark. The tail was deeply forked. The bill was dark and relatively small for a tern. The legs weren't seen.

**Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)** - The bird was seen flying over the lake, sometimes right over the water, sometimes a little higher but generally below treetop level. The only time I saw it go really high was the last time I saw it, when it went way up and was not seen to come down again. It sometimes appeared with small white terns and I saw it squabble with one of them a couple of times. (The small terns that we identified were all Common Terns. We couldn't always identify them.) I didn't see it engage in any obvious feeding behavior nor did I see it perch anywhere or sit on the water.

**Vocalizations** - none heard

**Supporting evidence if any:** (Check all that apply)

X Photograph

X Drawing

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)** -

When I arrived, people told me that they'd been seeing a Brown Noddy. Initially I thought they could be right, but as I got better views it became obvious that it was not a noddy.

The number of terns with dark bellies is rather limited - Brown & Black Noddies, young Sooty Terns, Black Terns and White-winged Terns. Adult Bridled Terns can be confused with adult Sooty Terns but juvenile Bridled Terns don't have dark bellies and ruling out Bridled Tern.

The forked tail immediately eliminated both Brown and Black Noddies plus noddies don't have a pale area on the rear of their bellies. Black and White-winged Terns are both noticeably smaller than Common Terns and have black bellies and are gray on top rather than being brown all over. Their tails aren't forked to the degree that this bird's tail was forked. The white on the leading edge of the wing was also wrong for all the other dark-bellied species.

**Discussion ñ anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:** This bird appeared as Hurricane Irene was passing to our east. Hurricanes are known to push species like Sooty Terns north and inland.

I managed to get one picture where this tern is visible in the distance. (It is a bad picture, but it does show a brown bird with long wings.) I made a pen drawing when I first got home and a colored pencil drawing later. I'm including all three.

**Previous experience with this and/or similar species -**

I have previously been a leader for birding tours in the Dry Tortugas where Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies breed and have seen them by the thousands, both adults and young. I've also seen plenty of Black Terns, and smaller numbers of Black Noddies and White-winged Terns.

**Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)**

Yes, I'm positive. It looked like a young Sooty Tern. It didn't look like anything else that I know of.

**References Consulted:**

**During Observation**

**After Observation** - Terns of Europe and North America, Klaus Malling Olsen and Hans Larsson

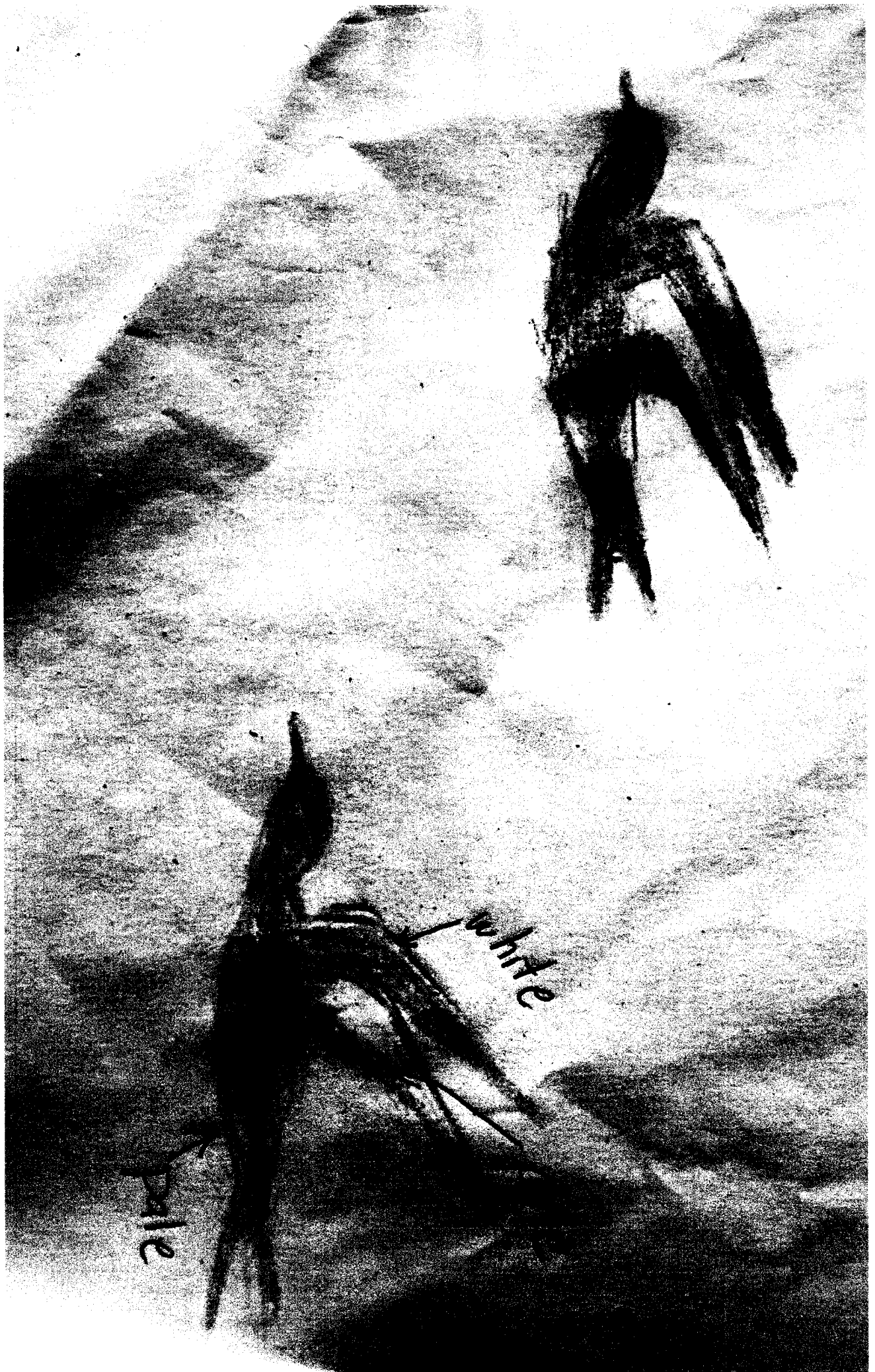
**Date of this Report:** August 29, 2011



slightly bigger than common Terns  
long, pointy wings  
deeply forked tail







white

pale

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Sooty Tern      *Sterna fuscata*

Date of Sighting: 28 August 2011 to 28 August 2011

County : BERKS

Location : LAKE ONTELAUNEE

Observer(s): Katrina Knight

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Katrina Knight

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. DeReamus			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
R. Koury			X					
D. Weber			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)      Nick Pulcinella

Date: 7/11/12