

February 23, 2005

Jason Horn
5020 S. Mountain Dr.
Emmaus, PA 18049

Jason

Many thanks for sending your description and sketch of the Roseate Tern you identified at Green Lane Reservoir on May 23, 2001. The committee was pretty evenly divided on this report, but voted 3 to 4 to not accept the record as definitive. The decision rested mostly on the briefness of the sighting more than anything else. For a species so rare away from the coast and with only 3 previous reports in the state a more detailed study, if not a photo, is needed. The fact that 1 of the previous reports is a specimen does make this frustrating since it proves the possibility of the species appearing again. Also troubling was that the bird you described was not a typical adult of any species. Adult terns complete the molt to "breeding" plumage in the south before migrating so the bird you saw was almost certainly a bird in its first or second summer plumage, approximately 11 or 22 months old assuming a July hatch date. So any of the 3 species you ruled out as well as Roseate would show the combination of dark outer primaries (to varying degrees) and a black bill with some red at the base. To be positive it would be necessary to see the bird perched and be able to see the tail extension part the wings, and leg length.

I do want to stress that this opinion does not mean the identification was wrong. It is quite possible the bird was a Roseate, and since you took the time to document the bird as well as possible the report will be archived to tantalize future birders and ornithologists.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Green Lane Res (Church Road)

7:30 pm

May 23 2001

M. ...
Co.

Very long forked Tail

Please forward
to P.O.R.C.

Jason Horn
5000 S. Main Dr
Emmaus PA 18049
(610) 967-4978

367-01-2001



crown black - fading into white
near b

bl mostly dark
w lighter base
(reddish)

ery light grey back

dark outer primaries + under

The bird was seen only in flight at a distance of 150 ft +
The bird appeared to be changing from basic to alternate plumage
and a nearly all black crown basic to alternate plumage
bird with some dark outer primaries; and a very deep forked white tail.
The fact that the bird had such a deep forked tail (light back and
dark trailing edge on the under helped to rule out
Common Tern. The fact that the bird had orange sides, head, neck, and bill;
a very pale appearance and dark upper primaries helped to rule out Black Tern.
Due to the amount of the dark on the outer primaries and the
and some on the conclusion that I had seen a Roseate Tern.
I was unable to get any photos due to the fact I flew.
Bird was present for a few minutes and then proceeded to
circle at a high altitude in a southerly direction.

Roseate Tern
Sterna dougallii

Please forward
to P.O.R.C.

580 S. Mtn Dr
Emmaus PA 18049
(610) 967-4978

Green Lane Res (Church Road)
7:30 pm May 23, 2001 Montgomery Co. of Pa.
very long forked Tail

367-01-2001



crown black - fading into white
near bill

bill mostly dark
with lighter base
(reddish)

very light gray back



dark outer primaries & pale under

The bird was seen only in flight at distance of ~150 ft +
The bird appeared to be changing from basic to alternate plumage
at a rapidly with black outer primaries and a reddish base (reddish), w.
Side view outer primaries; and a very deep forked white tail.
Due to these features I identified the bird to a Roseate Tern.
The bird had seen a deeply forked tail, light back and
dark outer primaries. The fact that the bird had average size head, neck, and bill;
a very pale appearance and dark outer primaries helped to rule out Arctic Tern.
Due to the amount of the dark on the outer primaries and the base
of the tail, a very light gray appearance led me to rule out Foster's Tern
and come to the conclusion that I had a Roseate Tern.
I was unable to get any photos due to lack of film!
Bird was present for a few minutes and then proceeded to gain
altitude and fly off in a westerly direction.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*)

Date of Sighting: 23 May 2001 to 23 May 2001

Location: GREEN LANE RESERVOIR

County: MONTGOMERY

Observer(s): Jason Horn

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Jason Horn

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	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Hess			X	X				
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer				X				
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			3	4				
DECISION				X				

Comments:

~~4/3 Go to 2nd Round~~

3/4

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

8/20/03