

August 26, 2005

David Reiger

Thank you for submitting the description of the Royal Tern you found October 11, 2003 at Presque Isle State Park. The report was voted 4-2 as **Class IV-A: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.**

Royal Tern is a southern coastal species with little tendency to stray very far from saltwater habitats. For one to make it to Presque Isle State park would be amazing even if assisted by Hurricane Isabel. Without a detailed description of the wings of the bird in flight it is hard to rule out the much more likely Caspian Tern. The amount of black and white on the head and the bill color are both variable characters, and there is more variation in terns than is depicted in most guides. Further Royal Tern is a fairly slender bird, with most of the length of a sitting bird being wings. A Caspian Tern is much bulkier. Both Royal and Caspian are longer than Ring-billed Gull, but Royal is smaller in terms of mass, while Caspian is larger (weights from Sibley Guide). So the description of the bird as same size as Ring-billed Gull suggests Caspian more than Royal which should appear shorter, but longer and less bulky compared to Ring-bill.

Thanks again for sending in the description.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

364-01-2003

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*
Subspecies (if known) _____

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) unknown

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): Non-breeding Adult

DATE OF OBSERVATION Oct 11, 2003 TIME 1:00p

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Erie

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Gull Point, Presque Isle State Park

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name DAVID RIEGER
Address 7724 ABBOTT ST
City PITTSBURGH State PA ZIP 15221
e-mail (optional) d.m.rieger@worldnet.att.net phone (optional) _____

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):
Claire Rieger

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Sand bar on edge of bay

DISTANCE TO BIRD 100 yards

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) Clear sky, temp 75°F, winds negligible, viewing to the west w/ sun to the south

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED 60mm Nikon Field scope II ED w/ 30x eye piece

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – 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): This was the only tern amongst approximately 100 gulls, most Ring-bill and a few Herring. The tern was standing on the end of a sand bar so it was in full view - not obstructed. It was facing right from my perspective. The bill was stout, clearly orange and had no black in its tip. The black in the head extended from the bill, through the eye and around the back of the head. There was some transition from the black up to the top of the head but the forehead was clearly white with no black streaking. There was a noticeable crest extending out from the back of the head. The tern stood directly in front of a Ring-billed Gull and was the same size. Legs were black. I did not see the bird fly so no wing pattern was observed.

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) The bird stood facing right the entire time we observed it.

VOCALIZATIONS None

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY: None
Photograph Video recording Audio recording Drawing
Photographer/recorder/illustrator:
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
e-mail (optional) _____ phone (optional) _____

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:
General condition _____
If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known _____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others) Caspian Tern (followed Peterson's description for similar species) Bill was orange, not red. No black tip on end of bill. Forehead was white, not streaked. Back of head showed a crest.

DISCUSSION – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES
Five years birding - viewed Caspians at Pisp before. Viewed Royals along coast. Although I cannot claim extensive experience.

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? (why or why not) Sure enough to submit this report.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:
During observation Peterson Guide to Southern Birds
After observation Sibley's - National Geographic

DATE OF THIS REPORT: Oct 16, 2003

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER [Signature]

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*)

Date of Sighting: 11 October 2003 to 11 October 2003

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): David Rieger, Claire Rieger

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: David Rieger,

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

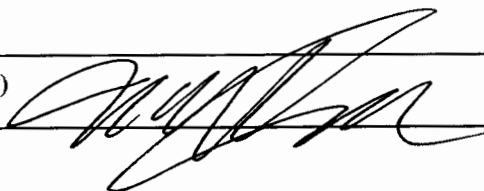
Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Armstrong R. Witmer			X					
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris								
J. Stanlev			X					
E. Witmer				X				
R. Leberman					X			
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			2	3	1			
DECISION				X				

Comments:

2/4

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

2/20/08