

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)

463-01-1999

P. O. Box 482
1336 Broadway
Hanover, PA 17331
12 June 1999

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

Dear PORC:

After learning that John Clarke had heard a Chuck-will's-widow, I went to his home to ask him about it, and asked him if he would write a report about it for the PORC. He wrote the attached report, dated May 26, 1999. His report does not really describe the Chuck-will's widow call, nor does it describe the difference between the Chuck-will's widow and the Whip-poor-will calls, but I know from discussing it with him twice, that he has heard Whip-poor-will in the past, and does know the difference between the Whip-poor-will and the Check-will's widow calls. John is a knowledgeable, long-time local birder.

Species: Chuck-will's-widow
Date/Time: 8 May 1999
Location: 1050 Stone Jug Road, Adams County
Observation: See attached

Sincerely,



Peter Robinson
717.632.8462
peterrobins@hotmail.com

463-01-1999

John Clarke
1050 Stone Jug Road
Biglerville, PA 17307

BIRD NOTE

On the evening of May 8, 1999, my wife, who had just stepped outside the house at about 8:30 P.M., heard a repeated whippoorwill-like song and then saw the bird skirting a short distance just above the ground. She then called me outside. It was deep dusk.

At first we heard and saw nothing. But after a few moments, not a hundred feet from us and across our country road where field grass gives way to a hill of saplings, we heard loudly, clearly, and unmistakably, Chuck-will's-widow. He repeated his song about ~~about~~ a dozen times and was then silent. I ducked into the house for my tape recorder, but the bird did not resume singing. He has been neither heard nor seen since.

The location is on Stone Jug Road, a third of a mile south of Route 234. This is about three miles east of Biglerville, Pa.

John Clarke
Judy Clarke

May 26, 1999

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Chuck-wills-widow (Caprimulgus carolinensis)

Date of Sighting: 8 May 1999 to 8 May 1999

Location: ADAMS

County: STONE JUG ROAD

Observer(s): John Clarke

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Peter Robinson

Written Description: Yes

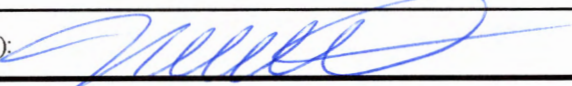
Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Couchman					X			
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes				X				
B. Reid					X			
P. Rodewald					X			
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			2	2	3			
DECISION					X			

Comments: 2/5

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 5/6/01