



Species: Chuck-will's-widows (2)

Date: May 24, 2007 - ??

Location: along Licking Creek southeast of Needmore (Fulton County), PA

Observer: Tom Johnson (also Ben Coulter)

On my first night of surveying specifically for Chuck-will's-widows in southern Fulton County (5/24/07), I discovered a singing male CWWI on my fourth stop. I got out of my car, played Chuck audio using my iPod and an amplified speaker, then immediately heard a "chip-widow-widow" in the distance. I hardly believed my ears as I was quite tired from a long day of point counts and other atlasing, but the bird continued to sing in the distance from a dry mixed forest slope above Licking Creek. The bird continued to sing throughout that night (5/24-5/25). I returned the next evening with Ben Coulter, and we taped the bird into sight. As it flew in, the bird gave oinking "aaaah" calls and snapping noises that I imagine were the wing-popping noises described in the literature. Limited white was visible in the outer rectrices as the bird flew overhead in a spotlight beam. I checked up on the Chuck each night until 5/28 (when I wrote this report). On 5/26 the bird began singing at 8:22 PM, and on 5/28 it began at 8:30 PM. On the evening of 5/26, I photographed the male in flight AND heard and saw a second CWWI. This bird was not singing, but rather foraging while giving the oinking "ahh" calls downslope from the perpetually singing male. I presume that this is a female Chuck-will's-widow and that these two birds represent a mated pair.

Interestingly, the slope that hosts the Chuck pair also provides habitat for a lot of other interesting birds and wildlife. Breeding birds along Licking Creek in the same area include Cooper's Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Vireo, Acadian Flycatcher, Northern Parula, Blackburnian Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. While attempting to photograph the male CWWI one evening, I almost stepped on a two-foot long Timber Rattlesnake that thankfully warned me with angry buzzing about a half second before I would have stepped on it. I was wearing shorts and sandals and was very appreciative of the warning, though at the immediate time I showed my thanks by shrieking and high-stepping it back up the slope.

I spent a considerable amount of time over the next four evenings attempting to locate additional Chuck-will's-widows in the area (since I'd had such good luck in targeting what I deemed to be appropriate CWWI habitat with my first informal survey) but only could find loads of Whip-poor-wills, though I spent most of the prime time for Caprimulgid searching hanging around the original Chuck trying to confirm breeding and/or obtain better photographs. I strongly believe that there are additional Chuck-will's-widows in the region of southern Frankling/ Fulton/ Bedford Counties along the Maryland border. Brauning and McWilliams suggested in *Birds of Pennsylvania* that southern Franklin and Fulton Counties provided likely sites for regularly breeding Chucks, and I agree with their assessment, though more exploration and field time is needed to confirm these suspicions. To the best of my knowledge, CWWI has never been confirmed as breeding in PA, and this occurrence of a PAIR might represent the "highest" breeding code ever recorded for the species in the state. I will be attempting to locate a nest or find fledglings later in the summer, but would appreciate that this record not be publicized any further. Birders seeking the exact location can contact me at 717.991.5727 but I may have to limit access since the bird is on private property and

more importantly, it could prove to be the first confirmed breeding record of a secretive bird in the Commonwealth.

Photos and a video which includes audio recording of the singing male (no actual image, as I just used my compact digital camera for the purpose of recording the audio) can be found and downloaded online at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/jaegermaster/PABreedingBirdAtlas2007>

Tom Johnson
May 28, 2007

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Chuck-will's widow (Caprimulgus carolinensis)

Date of Sighting: 24 May 2007 to 24 May 2007

Location: FULTON

County : NEEDMORE

Observer(s): Tom Johnson, Ben Coulter

Date of Submission: 2007

Submitted by: Tom Johnson

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

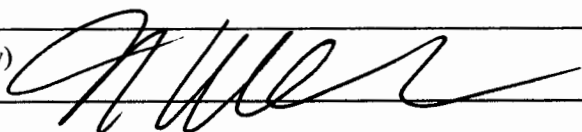
Specimen: No

Recording: Audio

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
J. Stanley B Coulter	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 70

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

12/6/07