

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

2469 Hammertown Road

Narvon, PA 17555

September 26, 1997

Joanne Stickler
R.1, Box 307
Lawrenceville, PA 16929

Dear Joanne,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Black-backed Woodpecker you saw at the East Lawrence Cemetery on 23 May 1996 to P.O.R.C. After careful review, we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The committee was concerned that the description provided did not rule out the possibility of a melanistic Downy or Hairy Woodpecker.

This of course, does not mean the bird was not a Black-backed Woodpecker, merely, that the record is not beyond reasonable doubt for acceptance

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record #521-01-1996

521-01-1996

June 20, 1996

POSSIBLE BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER REPORT

Birder: Joanna D. Stickler

R.1, Box 307, Lawrenceville, PA 16929

Date: May 23, 1996, about 4:45 PM;

Location: East Lawrence Cemetery, located 3 1/2 miles east of Rte. 15 on East Lawrence Rd., Lawrence Twp., Tioga County, PA.

Weather: bright overcast; visibility clear, not hazy; just starting to sprinkle slightly.

Particulars of sighting: Bird flew past me from a group of locust trees to a large single old maple with much dead and dying wood; distance 40 to 60 feet; I had no binoculars, but lighting conditions made bird's lack of common woodpecker-type markings very noticeable. As bird flew from in front of me to the left and away, it had typical undulating woodpecker flight style. I swiveled, saw it land, centered on the trunk, about 5 feet up on a huge maple; bird's back was toward me and it looked about the size and color of a starling; no visible markings. But it climbed up the trunk woodpecker fashion and around to the left to present a profile; definitely woodpecker, with a fairly slender neck and light colored underside, but no other apparent markings on back, nape, top of head, or throat. As it went behind the trunk, I hurried about 20 feet closer. When it reappeared, it was startled that I was so near, and flew directly away, showing just a tiny flash of something white in the tail. It flew across a creek and into mixed evergreen-hardwood forest. Then, rain shower began. At all times the bird had a background of tree or forest - no sky.

THIS IS DEFINITELY THE WRONG TIME OF YEAR FOR A BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER TO BE FOUND IN PA. However, upon analysis of habitat, size, completely black back, nape and top of head, and the fact that it was a woodpecker, I had to conclude that it was a female Black-backed Woodpecker.

Unfortunately, that area was the site of heavy traffic with grave digging machinery and funeral proceedings for the next several days. My personal schedule did not permit me to return there until 5/31. Returned to cemetery at 5 PM; found a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker not far from that area. May 23 sighting couldn't have been a YBSA. YBSA isn't black on the back, has very noticeable white facial markings and wing stripe. Also, it was too early in season for a darker im. YBSA here; (our first YBSAs of year arrived April 22; they require at least 6 weeks to nest and fledge young.)

June 17, 1996: Checked out cemetery area; found no woodpeckers of any kind, but noted a good selection of other regular summer species.

Joanna Stickler

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Black-backed Woodpecker (Picoides arcticus)**

Date of Sighting: **23 May 1996 to 23 May 1996**

Location: **EAST LAWRENCE CEMETARY - LAWRENCE TWP**

County: **TIOGA**

Observer(s): **Joanna Stickler**

Date of Submission: **1996**

Submitted by: **Joanna Stickler**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas				X				
N. Pulcinella				X				
E. Kwater						X		
R. Ickes						X		
G. McWilliams						X		
P. Schwalbe				X				
S. Feldstein							X	
TOTALS				3		3	1	
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

2-22-97