

Submission Date	2012-12-17 20:29:21
Observer's Name	Matthew Sabatine
E-mail	mattsab12@yahoo.com
Observer's Address	Street Address: 115 B Fox Gap Ave. City: Bangor State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 18013 Country: United States
Species (Common Name)	Cave Swallow
Species (Scientific Name)	Petrochelidon fulva
Subspecies (if known)	Mexican
Number of individuals	1
Have you submitted this to eBird?	Yes
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	adult or sub-adult; I don't have experience with juveniles, but it appeared more brightly colored than they would be
Observation Date and Time	10-31-2012 12:18 PM
County	Northampton
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Lower Mount Bethel Township
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	restricted access pond off of Depues Rd.
GPS coordinates of sighting	40° 47' 49.55", -75° 7' 11.42
Habitat	man made fly ash pond from the nearby PP&L power plant; surrounded by agricultural fields and the delaware river, less than 1/4 mile to the east
Distance to bird	perhaps 70 feet at its closest point
Viewing conditions	overcast skies, still slightly windy from the passage of Sandy the day before
Optical equipment used	Nikon 10x42 Monarch
Description	I stood near the edge of the pond photographing a Brant which was hanging out there, and noticed a small but steady stream of Tree Swallows coming in from the east, very likely from the river, and coursing low over the pond before continuing to the

west/northwest; shortly after the Tree Swallows were moving through in good numbers, I picked up on a pale-rumped dark swallow with a pale forehead, obviously of the Cave/Cliff guild. I first noticed it with a rather awkward angle, with it flying more or less straight toward me at the north/northwest end of the pond. However, when I was able to get a better look at the bird, I noticed the extremely pale forehead and pale cheeks/face with pale beige coloration underneath and navy blue on top contrasting with the pale rump patch and squared tail in shape.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

this individual did exactly what the Tree Swallows did, com in from the east/southeast, presumably being navigated by the river, course low over the pond before continuing North/Northwest and out of sight in the direction of the agricultural fields to the north. Also like the Tree Swallows, it spent little time flying over the pond. The birds given their flight behavior were not flying over the pond to hunt for insects, but rather were probably drawn to the water itself. It was a matter of 10 or so seconds and the bird was out of view, again, like the Tree Swallows that came before it.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

given the plumage characteristics, the only other species possible would be the very similar Cliff Swallow. I concluded it to be a Cave due to the pale beige forehead patch, as well as cheeks/face/throat being pale in color, as well as how light/pale the underside was; I concluded it was of the Mexican and not Caribbean ssp. due to the aforementioned pale coloration on the features already noted.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

like many of the pelagic species, Cave Swallows were reported in relatively high numbers as a result of hurricane Sandy; this individual was representative of several that were detected either during Sandy's passage (Oct. 30) or the day after (Oct. 31). I am unaware of any Cliff Swallow reports from these days.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

yes. I am very familiar with Cliff Swallows as a fairly common PA resident, and have also seen a handful of Cave Swallows, some in Texas, but also one 'reverse migrant' like this individual in New Jersey. Though the differentiation between Cliff and Cave can at times be difficult if not seen in good lighting close distance, I feel strongly that the views were sufficient to rule out Cliff Swallow.

After

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