

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

12 February 2002

Randy C. Miller
607 Woodland Drive
Manheim, PA 17545-9553

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation of the Thayer's Gulls at Memorial Lake State Park on December 24 and 26, 1997, and the Northern Wheatear there on October 19, 1998. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted not to accept these records.

Thayer's Gulls: Members' opinions were divided, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly explains the delay in announcing our decision). The final vote was five votes in favor of acceptance and two not in favor -- one vote short of the 6-1 decision which our bylaws require for acceptance.

One dissenting member felt that the birds were quite likely Thayer's but was concerned that a Thayer's/Iceland intergrade was not eliminated conclusively. The other felt that there was not quite enough detail to be sure about bird #1. About bird #2 he was troubled by the pinkish base to the bill, commenting "I think it is really too early for a 1st-winter to have this."

Northern Wheatear: Balloting went two rounds on this record as well, with a final vote wof four members favoring acceptance and three not in favor.

The outcome placed the record in PORC'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."

The three dissenting members expressed one or both of two concerns: There was no mention in the description of whether the inverted T on a Northern Wheatear's tail was seen. The (indeed very remote!) possibility of an Isabelline Wheatear from the Old World was not eliminated, as it was for a bird seen earlier in October in Juniata County.

Non-acceptance certainly does not imply that these birds were not identified correctly, but rather that too few members felt they could accept the records with certainty. We hope this does not discourage you from submitting reports of rarities in the future.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record #348-03-1997, 348-04-1997 (Thayer's Gulls); 646-02-1997 (Northern Wheatear)

RARE SPECIES REPORT

646-02-1997

SPECIES: Northern Wheatear ^{Imm.} "Eastern"		NUMBER SEEN: 1
SIGHTING DATE: 19 Oct. 1997		SIGHTING TIME: 8am - 9:15am
LOCATION:	COUNTY & STATE: Lebanon Co., Penna. DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: 6 miles north on Rt. 934 from Annville, Pa DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE: Memorial Lake State Park	
HABITAT: On dam breast with large rocks with some small shrubs. Apx 200 yards long.		
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: Partly cloudy DISTANCE: 60 yards to 100+ yards EQUIP. USED: 15x45 Bushnell and 10x50 Swifts. LENGTH OF SIGHTING: 1st sighting was apx. 30 seconds, brief sightings in flight.	
DESCRIPTION:	VOICE: not heard SIZE: apx 6" PLUMAGE: Cinnamon breast, med. brown back and top of head, buff supercilium, dark mask, dark eye, small thin black bill, dark brown wings with no wing bars, rump and top of tail white, lower half of tail dark brown. Belly light buff. White undertail coverts. ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): Dark legs, short thin black bill, medium length tail BEHAVIOR: I first saw this bird sitting on top of a post on the dam breast. Then it flew out of sight. The only other sightings were of the bird being chased by Am. Robins.	
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES: I have seen Northern Wheatear only in Alaska. This was my first sighting of the "Eastern" race.		
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES: I don't know of another small thrush shaped bird with a large white rump and upper tail.		
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? no IF SO, BY WHO?		
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who?		
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space):		
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: Randy C. Miller		
ADDRESS: 607 Woodland Dr. Manheim Pa 17545		PHONE #: (717) 664-3778
SIGNATURE: Randy C. Miller		DATE: 21 Oct. 1997

On 19 Oct. 1997 I went birding with the Lancaster Co. Bird Club to Memorial Lake. Rosemary Spreha lead the group of 10 people.

We birded around the dam area first. I carried by 15x45 Bushnell and 10x50 Swifts. Below the dam there were apx. 300± Am. Robins. Twice I saw a bird with white on the rump. It would fly, then land where I could not see it. Most people were watching the 5 Rusty Blackbirds in the creek. Then I saw the bird fly up and land on a post. It was apx. 60 yards away. I put my scope on it and saw it was a Northern Wheatear. After 30 sec. it flew to the top of the dam breast. The white rump + top of the tail were highly visible. The group quickly went to the top of the dam breast. We sighted the bird 5-6 more times around the rocks, always being chased by Am. Robins. It would fly 20 to 100 yards, then hide in the rocks. We didn't go down into the rocks because we did not want to scare the bird away. We were hoping for a better view. But at 9:15 the N. Wheatear was seen being chased by an Am. Robin south until it was out of sight.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Date of Sighting: 19 October 1998 to 19 October 1998

Location: MEMORIAL LAKE

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): Randy Miller

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Randy Miller

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO NO SPECIMEN NO RETURNING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman				X				
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes			X					
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			4	2				1
DECISION			4	2				1

Comments: 4/2/1 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 1/14/01

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round Two

Species: Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Date of Sighting: 19 October 1997 to 19 October 1997

Location: MEMORIAL LAKE

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): Randy Miller

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Randy Miller

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

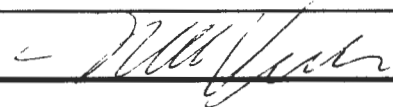
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman				X				
G. Armistead			X					
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes				X				
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			4	3				
DECISION				X				

Comments: 4/3/00 rejected

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 10/20/01