

## PA Rare Bird Report

<b>Submission Date</b>	2016-01-08 07:59:49
<b>Observer's Name</b>	Diane Allison
<b>E-mail</b>	dalliso@mail.ptd.net
<b>Phone</b>	6108472085
<b>Observer's Address</b>	Street Address: 108 Ervin Rd City: Pipersville State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 18947 Country: United States
<b>Names of additional observers</b>	Ann Rhoads, Zack Moyer, and Ben Vizzachero
<b>Species (Common Name)</b>	Mountain Bluebird
<b>Species (Scientific Name)</b>	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>
<b>Number of individuals</b>	1
<b>Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)</b>	Male
<b>Observation Date and Time</b>	12-27-2015 8:30 AM
<b>Did you submit this sighting to eBird?</b>	Yes
<b>County</b>	Bucks
<b>Location (City, Borough, Township)</b>	Tinicum Township
<b>Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)</b>	Tory Rd
<b>GPS coordinates of sighting</b>	40.446028 - 75.091719
<b>Habitat</b>	Fields with cedar hedgerows
<b>Distance to bird</b>	about 75 yards
<b>Viewing conditions</b>	Very poor, overcast, fog, misting, dark
<b>Optical equipment used</b>	10x42 binocs and Leica 20-60X scope

## Description

On Sunday Dec. 27th , 2015 on the Central Bucks Christmas Bird Count at about 8:30AM we were traveling by car down Wormansville/Tory Rd in Tinicum Township Bucks County. The weather was overcast with a fine mist and light fog, not optimum viewing conditions for sure. We approached a hedgerow and noticed some bird activity and stopped to observe out the car windows. There were huge flocks of robins moving in the area that morning so many of the birds moving in the hedgerow were robins. I spotted a smaller bird flying low which I thought was a bluebird by size and flight pattern before I put the binocs on it. When I got on it, it flew upward towards a large deciduous tree between groups of cedar trees. As it flew upward for a full backview and I caught blue on the wings, so my thought of bluebird was confirmed. At this point having seen thousands of eastern bluebirds I should have just moved on, but something kept my attention, the blue that I caught was on the wings, almost a silvery blue, the rest of the bird appeared grayish from the backview which at that point I attributed to the poor light. I thought it was going to be an eastern bluebird, perhaps a dull male or even a female, but something seemed odd so I stayed on it and it flew into the large tree and landed. It was now a side view of the bird and oddly enough I saw no rust on the breast. I could only see a thin sliver of the breast from the side, but I was sure I saw no red (10X42binocs) at maybe 75 yds. The red that would extend from the throat around towards the nape in an eastern was also absent. At this point I told the others that I had this "bluebird" that didn't seem to have any red on the breast and I wanted to get out and put the scope on it. We had two scopes, one is a leica with a 20-60X eyepiece and we set up both scopes. There were four of us. The bird had now turned more toward us so we had a frontal view and each of us looked thru the scope and announced NO red, just gray on the breast. Could it be a mountain bluebird someone said out loud. I thought about some sort of leucistic eastern bluebird but it was not white it was light gray on the underside and the head showed no blue either instead appearing darker gray than the underside. Just as we all got a look and began to think we should try a digiscope photo, a pair of eastern bluebirds flew into the tree and it flew out going out of view across a large field. Our whole observation time from my first spotting it until the end of our scope views was probably not more than 4-5 minutes, including the time to exit the car, get out the scopes and get them on the bird and all take a look. Zack observed that he thought it appeared a bit more elongated or upright in its posture than an eastern and looked like it had more of a "neck". In retrospect, I think what made me follow the bird initially until it perched was the lack of blue in the backview above the wings and on the back of the head. It just looked gray. I at first thought it was going to be a male eastern as I saw the blue on the wings but something about that lack of color on the upper back and head and the blue on the wings just didn't fit in with my Eastern Bluebird experience, even for a female, the back and head color was not right. I have seen many dull eastern females and the color is more brown in the dull ones not gray. I have experience with Mountain Bluebirds from trips out west but I admit, because of the rarity, that it was not the first thing that jumped into my head as an explanation for my discomfort with the first look, until I saw that there was no red on the breast. I returned several times a day for the next 4 days and on the 5th day, January 1, 2016 I checked in the morning and found nothing. I went back at about 11:15AM on what was another cloudy day. I spotted 2 eastern bluebirds and then 2 more in the very same tree that I had found the bird in question 5 days before. While watching the 4 easterns, a fifth bird flew up from low in the hedgerow and when it turned as it flew and I caught its backview, I immediately picked up the "correct blue" for a mountain bluebird. I got on the bird and sure enough it was a beautiful mountain bluebird, much more vibrant than what I had been able to see on that rainy, cloudy, foggy day on the 27th. Now it was very obvious, so I dashed out for a documenting photo which after much mud slogging I was able to obtain. It is attached to this report. I then called Devich Farbotnik and August Mirabella. Devich arrived in about 20 minutes at which point the birds had flown off but moments later returned in a group of about 10 eastern bluebirds and remained in the vicinity for several hours feeding in the cedars. August made it up to view it as well. I am sure Devich has better photos than I, but I was just trying to get the final proof!!!! What a beautiful bird. Diane Allison

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

See Above

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)**

See Above

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

After many tries thru the week I relocated the bird on January 1, 2016 and took diagnostic photos. It sure was easier with some light!!! It is now January 4th and it is still here. After I found it again Devich Farbotnik came and observed the bird as well on January 1.

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

Yes

**After**

Sibley and Crossley

**Supporting evidence (check all that apply)**

Photograph

**Upload images, audio, video or drawings**



[DSC\\_0957.jpg](#)



[DSC\\_0960.jpg](#)

## PA Rare Bird Report

<b>Submission Date</b>	2016-01-09 20:51:48
<b>Observer's Name</b>	Michael David
<b>E-mail</b>	michaeldavid@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	4123906773
<b>Observer's Address</b>	Street Address: 7420 BEN HUR ST City: PITTSBURGH State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 15208 Country: United States
<b>Names of additional observers</b>	Andy McGann, Diane Allison
<b>Species (Common Name)</b>	Mountain Bluebird
<b>Species (Scientific Name)</b>	<i>Sialia currocoides</i>
<b>Number of individuals</b>	1
<b>Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)</b>	Male
<b>Observation Date and Time</b>	01-07-2016 8:30 AM
<b>Did you submit this sighting to eBird?</b>	Yes
<b>Link to eBird checklist</b>	<a href="http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S26755287">http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S26755287</a>
<b>County</b>	Bucks
<b>Location (City, Borough, Township)</b>	Pipersville
<b>Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)</b>	Tory Rd
<b>GPS coordinates of sighting</b>	40.445593, -75.091692
<b>Habitat</b>	Treelines along open fields
<b>Distance to bird</b>	50 m
<b>Viewing conditions</b>	clear
<b>Optical equipment used</b>	Swarovski ATX-95 scope
<b>Description</b>	Blue on head, back, wings, and tail, a shade more towards a turquoise color reminiscent of INBU as compared with EABL. Blue color blended smoothly into a blue-gray on throat and underparts, with undertail coverts whitish. This bird had a thinner bill than EABL, and longer wings, with different spacing between the stacked primary ends (one gap significantly larger than the others, as well as larger than any on EABL wings).

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

Associating with a flock of Eastern Bluebirds, feeding in cedars and on the ground and resting in bare deciduous trees.

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)**

Blue-gray underside instead of orange breast and white belly as on Eastern Bluebird. Also thinner bill and longer wings.

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

Yes - diagnostic photographs.

**During**

Sibley Guide

**Supporting evidence (check all that apply)**

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings



[Mountain Bluebird, Bucks Co, PA 2.JPG](#)



[Mountain Bluebird, Bucks Co, PA 3.JPG](#)



[Mountain Bluebird, Bucks Co, PA 4.JPG](#)



[Mountain Bluebird, Bucks Co, PA.JPG](#)