

850-01-1784

August 16, 1989

Pennsylvania Birds  
attn Mrs. B Haas  
769 East Forge Rd  
Media Pa. 19063

#650

Dear Mrs. Haas

1) Thank you for the back issues. Sorry about the confusion, but we never got the post card, but we did get all the back issues.

2) PORC record Townsend's Solitaire

My wife and I were with Dave Freeland on Sat 5/12/84 when he saw this bird at Presque Isle State Park. Unfortunately we were taking a late lunch break while Dave continued to bird nearby in the woods. We heard Dave's excited scream; but despite a lengthy search along with several other birders, nobody was able to spot this single bird again. His description was that of the Townsend's Solitaire. I know this was then reported in the American Birds.

I worked with Dave on the ASWP Board at that time but have lost touch with him after he moved from Pittsburgh. I hope this is of some use to you.

Sincerely,



Randolph W. Gerrish

#1650

SPECIES: Townsend's Solitaire

DATE: May 12, 1984

LOCATION: Presque Isle State Park, PA

HABITAT: Edge of mixed conifer/deciduous woods beside thick-brush wetland near extremity of peninsula leading into Lake Erie; trail was within 100 yards of entrance to Gull Point

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: 10x50 BINOCULARS @ 10-30 YDS.

CONDITIONS: Clear, sunny day; sun virtually overhead

TIME OF DAY: 11:45 A.M.

OBSERVER(S): David B Freehand, plus members of Pittsburgh beginning bird study class

DETAILS:

This bird was encountered, unanticipated, in area near extremity of peninsula in deciduous tree near area of mixed brush/marsh. Movement seen, I focused binoculars on bird partially obscured by new leaves. As it leaned forward to fly from perch, upper half of body was in view, revealing brownish-gray head, upper-back & wings and prominent white eye-ring.

It flew swiftly to perch in another (coniferous) tree, a red pine, about 15 yards distant and 15 feet from ground. Tree was about 25 feet high. While in flight, bird presented appearance of brownish-gray with white outer edges of tail.

Perched erect, the bird proved to be smaller than American Robin (perhaps towhee-sized) and of flycatcher dimensions. The body was medium in build and the tail rather long, Catbird-like. In this position, the brownish-gray appearance proved to be basically grayish with brownish wing patches. The eye-ring was clearly visible at 30 yards. The breast was of only slightly lighter cast than the back and wings.

As I moved closer to the bird, I called out to other nearby birders that I had a Townsend's

Solitaire. Almost at once, the bird sprung from its perch, flew around the red pine and -- at an elevation of 15-20 feet -- appeared only briefly before disappearing into the woods.

A subsequent search of the area, utilizing 8 birders sweeping an area 40 yards wide by 150 yards deep in 15 minutes, failed to produce the bird. Subsequent searches were conducted within the hour by expert amateur ornithologists, but knowledge is not known of added sightings.

Although seen for a total of only 10-15 seconds, my observations were clear and I have no doubt that this bird was a Townsend's Solitaire.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I first saw this species on July 17, 1983 in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, in the parking area at Bear Lake. I saw 2 others during the week, all in good light at reasonable range, and became well familiar with the bird. The Presque Isle bird was very similar.

STATUS: I believe this observation to be the first in Pennsylvania for the species. It is at least a new record for Western Pennsylvania.

*J. Steeland*  
2545 Countryside Lane  
Wexford, PA 15090  
(412) 935-3168

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round #2 of 2

Species: **Townsend's Solitaire**

Date of Sighting: **12 May 1984**

Observer(s): **Dave Freeland**

Date of Submission: **1991 Erie**

Submitted by: **Randolph W. Gerrish**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas				X			
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman				X			
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS			5	2			
DECISION				X			

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*Om Haas*

Date:

*3/7/92*

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

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					A	B	C
E. Kwater				X			
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman				X			
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe				X			
<b>TOTALS</b>			4	3			
<b>DECISION</b>							

Comments:

*Send for Second Round*

Signature (Secretary):

Date: