



(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

SUPPORTING DETAILS: UNCOMMON OR RARE SPECIES/HIGH NUMBERS

CBC Name BUTLER, PA Date DEC 18, 1993 Compiler Gene Wilhelm, Ph. D.  
Observer writing this account & date Gene Wilhelm, Ph. D. Dec. 20, 1993

SPECIES Townsend's Solitaire NUMBER, AGE, SEX 1 adult; sex ?  
Distance from bird(s) 20 m Relative size of bird size of robin but slimmer

HEAD & NECK (Describe forehead, crown, auricular, malar region, median line, etc.)  
Small gray head; short gray neck; did not get top view of head and neck. The bird

continued to circle above our heads preventing a good top view except when banking.

EYE & LORES (Describe supercilium, ring, stripe, color, etc.)  
Dark eyes (black?) with bold white eye-rings.

UPPER & LOWER MANDIBLES Stubby bill; upper & lower mandibles dark gray/black.

LEGS & FEET Black legs and feet.

UPPERPARTS (Describe nape, back, rump, upper tail coverts, etc.)  
Could not see upperparts well since the bird was directly overhead (circling).

UNDERPARTS (Describe throat, belly, side, flanks, crissum, etc.)  
Gray throat, belly, sides, flanks; white axillaries that looked like white patches against sides.

RECTRICES (Describe inner, middle, outer tail feathers, color pattern, shape, etc.)  
Tail fan-shaped when the bird was circling overhead with distinctive notch; white outer tail feathers; dark-gray to black inner and middle tail feathers to coverts.

WING (Describe color, length, shape, linings, bars, coverts, leading & trailing edges, etc.)  
Leading & trailing edges brown-gray; white axillaries; buffy line or patch extending from mid-wing lining to primaries with dark brown-gray line in front of buff.

VOCALIZATION Only heard a call note of 'peet, peet' uttered three or four times.

BEHAVIOR Very flycatcher-like in flight; jerky, irregular slow flight pattern with primaries and secondaries and tail spread while circling.

Date of observation 12-18-93 Time 0930 hrs Weather cloudy Sky low ceiling

Duration of observation 3 minutes Bird - Sun orientation overcast; no sun

Exact location Pleasant Valley recreation area, south shore, Moraine State Park

Habitat open grassland Other observers C. Cornelius, L. & M. Newman, B. & G. Wilson.

Optical equipment 8 x 30 Nikon, 9 x 35 Bausch & Lomb, 10x Zeiss

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS After birding for some 40 years, and observing certain unusual species such as the Townsend's Solitaire in many different places under many different natural circumstances, one almost instinctly knows "the bird" when seen any-

AN ACCOMPANYING SKETCH OR PHOTOGRAPH CAN BE MOST HELPFUL where.

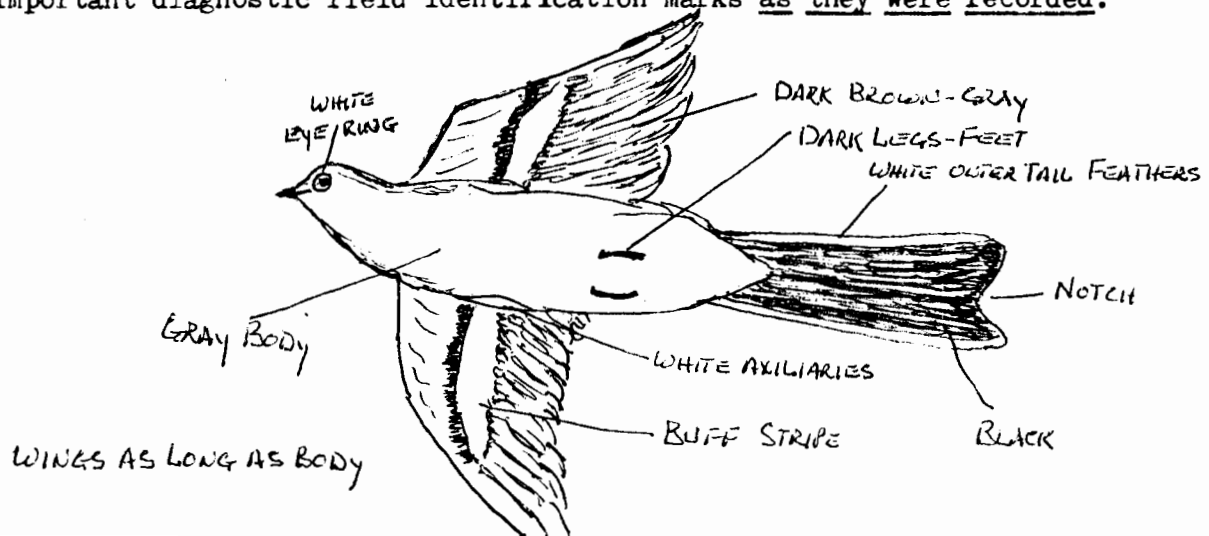
Our Butler, Pennsylvania CBC field party of six individuals was counting American Coots in the Pleasant Valley recreation area on the south shore of Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park when suddenly Benjamin Wilson, an alert twelve year old birder, observed a bird flying east to west toward us at approximately 20 m altitude. Ben instantly called: "Bird, look up!" The group could discern immediately that the bird was not another American Robin that passed in review five minutes previously because the bird's body was longer and slimmer, its underparts gray, with long tail, small head and stubby bill. The bird seemed confused with a low ceiling of 50 m and a fog bank that extended to ground and water level one-half mile north, east, and west of our observation point. The bird started circling 20 m above our heads in a jerky erratic fashion with tail and wings that flapped rather slowly spread wide. Immediately I yelled: "Get identification marks on that bird!"

As the bird continued making five irregular circuitous flights directly above us, party members emphatically observed the following: underwing buffy lines or patches extending from the wrist to white feathered axiliaries that looked like white patches against the side, a dark gray-black almost fan-shaped tail with white outertail feathers and a distinctive notch. As the bird turned its head right to left while flying, a bold white eye-ring was obvious. The bird uttered three or four times a metallic 'peet, peet' call note as it circled. On the second circle I knew that we had a Townsend's Solitaire.

In truth, the bird resembled a large flycatcher in flight, not a thrush, and all identification marks seen by all six observers conclusively pinpointed an adult Townsend's Solitaire. The bird finally flew after three minutes of excellent observation southwest into the dense fog bank and was not seen again.

The compiler is familiar with the species from extensive birding in the western states since 1960s. In fact, I researched the breeding activities of the species within Olympic National Park, Washington, and incorporated my local findings into my book COMMON BIRDS OF OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK. Since then I have observed the species in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah mountains and also in the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua State, Mexico.

Although the bird was seen only in the air for three minutes, all members of the CBC field party agreed that the diagnostic identification marks in flight were convincing: underwing elongated buffy lines or patches extending the full length of each wing, white axiliaries that looked like white patches against the sides, dark gray-black almost fan-shaped tail with outer white feathers and a conspicuous notch (Northern Shrike and Northern Mockingbird have rounded dark tails and white wing patches), gray slim body, small head and stubby bill. We mentally recorded all diagnostic field marks first while observing the bird circle above our heads before we ever consulted our field guides. After doing so, the other five party members agreed with my earlier call: the bird was definitely an adult Townsend's Solitaire. A crude sketch, drawn in the field at the observation site, is included below hopefully to illustrate the most important diagnostic field identification marks as they were recorded.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Townsend's Solitaire (Myadestes townsendi)**

Date of Sighting: **18 December 1993 to 18 December 1993**

Location: **MORAINES STATE PARK**

County: **BUTLER**

Observer(s): **Gene Wilhelm**

Date of Submission: **1993**

Submitted by: **Gene Wilhelm**

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					
J. Skinner			X					
<b>TOTALS</b>			7					
<b>DECISION</b>			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*J. C. Haas*

Date:

9-25-94