

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380

2 March 2003

Allan Bruce
1173 Kepler Road
Pottstown, PA 19464

Dear Allan,

Thank you for submitting documentation of the Townsend's Solitaire on 30 September 2001 at Pottstown. After careful review, the Committee has voted not to accept this record.

The members were divided in their opinions, and the balloting went two rounds before a final vote of two in favor of acceptance and four not in favor.

Those who favored acceptance felt that the description adequately eliminated confusion with Northern Mockingbird and other species.

Those who voted not to accept the record placed it in Category IV-A, "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt." The doubt involved a concern that a juvenile Mockingbird, though the date would have been rather late, was not ruled out conclusively.

Let me emphasize that our decision does not necessarily imply that the bird was not a Townsend's Solitaire, but simply that the Committee felt that acceptance required more unequivocal evidence. We hope that our non-acceptance in this case will not discourage you from submitting reports on any future rarities you find.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chair

Record No. 650-02-2000

650-02-2000

Townsend's Solitaire (*myadestes townsendi*) Sighting

Date: Sept. 30, 2000

Time: 10:00 AM to 10:20 AM

Location: 1173 Kepler Rd. Pottstown (Lower Pottsgrove Twp) Montgomery County, PA 19464

Weather: Low to mid 70's f, no wind and sunny

Distance and Angles: The bird was perched on a branch with no leaves, at the top of a tree; about 15 feet high and we were about 25 feet away from the tree.

Observers: Allan Bruce, Carolyn Bruce and Steven Bruce, 1173 Kepler Rd, Pottstown PA 19464 (610) 718-9655, just4u2tel@aol.com

Optic: Binolux binoculars 20 x 50 (157 ft at 1000 yds.)

Observation: The bird was singing while perched at the top of the tree. The song did not follow a pattern and had high and low notes which was distinctly different than the song of a Mockingbird. We notice the color of the bird was a darker gray and the head was shaped different than the Mockingbird. The head was more like a point or almost a crest while the head of the Mockingbird is flatter. The bird was standing upright; the Mockingbird leans forward while standing. We got our binoculars so we could get a better view and walked around the house to see from many angles.

Observation with binoculars: We saw a white ring around a dark eye with light streaks behind the eyes while the Mockingbirds have yellow eyes with no ring and dark streaks behind the eyes. We also notice a shorter and thicker bill than the Mockingbirds, and a dark streak from the base of the bill to his eye while Mockingbirds have a light streak from the base of his bill to his eye. The white markings on the tail are no way similar because they are thinner than the Mockingbird. The wings are shape different than the Mockingbird and have tan markings, no white markings while the Mockingbird has no tan but white markings. The bird flashed us and we notice under the wings were patches that were white with no distinctive shape, the Mockingbird patches under the wings having a distinct shape.

Conclusion: Because of the clear view from almost all angles the field marks of the white rings around the dark eyes and the field marks of the tan marking on the wings, the bird even flash us while we were viewing it and the difference in the song. Even though we do not have any experience with this species, we do have experience with Mockingbirds and with the great difference in the field markings, shape of the head and wings, the color difference, the position the bird was standing and the help of the references listed below we concluded it could only be a Townsend's Solitaire.

References: Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds and Peterson Guide on CD ROM

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

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

Date of Sighting: 30 September 2000 to 30 September 2000

Location: POTTSTOWN

County: MONTGOMERY

Observer(s): Allan Bruce, Carolyn Bruce, Steven Bruce

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Allan Bruce

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

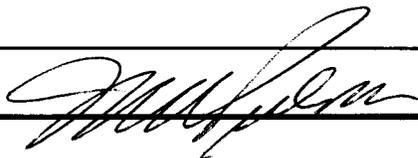
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead				X				
D. Couchman			X					
P. Hess			X					
R. Jokes J. Stanley			X					
B. Reid			X					
B. Leberman P. Rodewald			X					
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			5	2				
DECISION								

Comments: 5/2/0 - GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 11/4/01

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round Two

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

Date of Sighting: 30 September 2000 to 30 September 2001

Location: POTTSTOWN

County: MONTGOMERY

Observer(s): Allan Bruce, Carolyn Bruce, Steven Bruce

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Allan Bruce

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	
G. Armistead				X				
D. Couchman D. Heathcote				X				
P. Hess			X					
J. Stanley			X					
B. Reid				X				
R. Leberman				X				
M. Sharp								
TOTALS			2	4				
DECISION				X				

Comments: 2/4

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 1/12/03