















TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE
Myadestes townsendi

Location: Fairview Township, Erie County, Pa.

Date: January 8, 2007

Time: 3:07 to 4:10 PM

Weather: Mostly Cloudy, wind west to 25 mph.

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: no optics necessary because of close views

Viewing distance: ten feet or less.

Details of sighting and description: I received an e-mail from Mark Anderson saying that he felt certain that he had a Townsend's Solitaire. My wife Linda, Ben Coulter, and I went over and saw the bird immediately after we arrived. We viewed it from inside the house through a glass windowed door as it sat in a fruit-bearing ornamental tree (Bradford pear, *Pyrus calleryana*) no more than ten feet from us just above eye-level. I took over 200 photos of the bird at my leisure as it rested and fed on the fruits. It was about the size of a bluebird and the entire body was a medium gray, being slightly on the underside. The undertail coverts were gray and edged with white. It had a bluebird-like black bill and a prominent white eyering. The primaries were dark gray-brown with two orange-buff diagonally bands. The tertials and secondaries were finely edged with white and the tips of the tertials and greater coverts were strongly tipped with white. At least two of the greater coverts on the left side of the bird were tipped with buff indicating that the bird was a first year bird in molt. The tail was gray and unmarked, moderate in length, and was also in molt. Several rectrices were only partly grown out including the outer white ones.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*)

Erie, Erie County, PA / January 13, 2005

by Mike Fialkovich

This bird was posted by Jerry McWilliams to the Pennsylvania Birds Listserv a few days prior to my observation. It was present since January 31, 2006 at a residence in Erie, where it fed on fruits of a tree planted in a yard. The tree was just a few feet outside the windows of the house so it was easy to obtain close views. I saw the bird twice in this tree for at least fifteen minutes total and in another tree where it perched for about two minutes. I took about two minutes of video and included two video captures of the bird for documentation. It was also well photographed by other observers.

Description:

- This bird exhibited the typical thrush behavior of a relaxed manner, sitting still with occasional turns of the head and flicks of the tail.
- The build was typically thrush like, but slimmer and longer tailed compared to others in its family.
- Overall the bird was dark brown with a bold white eye ring. The eye ring was wider around the rear of the eye. The head, back, rump, throat, breast, sides and belly were uniform dark brown.
- The wings and tail were darker than the body (blackish brown). The wings had buff patches at the base of the primaries and along the flight feathers. The tertials were edged and tipped white.
- Bill, legs and feet black. Bill thin and short.
- Tail proportionally long, with white outer feathers.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) at Fairview Township, Erie County, PA, 9-Jan-2007

Observer:

Geoff Malosh
450 Amherst Ave.
Moon Township, PA 15108-2654
412.269.1413
pomarine@earthlink.net

Location: Backyard of 6054 Bridlewood Street, Fairview Township. Homeowner: Mark Anderson

Temperature: 25 F
Wind: W 10-15 MPH
Sky: overcast with snow showers
Time: 8:45 AM to 9:50 AM
Equipment: Leica 10x42 BN binoculars
Camera: Canon 20D with 100-400mm f/5.6L lens
Photos or audio recordings: 4 photos submitted, taken from a range of 10-15 feet
Accompanying observers: Ben Coulter, Sam Stull, Dave Wilton, Mark Anderson, others
Documentation date: January 10, 2007
Submission date: January 10, 2007

Photos:

- TownsendsSolitaireJan-9-2007a7s_8626.jpg - side view
- TownsendsSolitaireJan-9-2007b7s_8628.jpg - side view, minor wing stretch
- TownsendsSolitaireJan-9-2007c7s_8638.jpg - partial front view including underside of the tail
- TownsendsSolitaireJan-9-2007d7s_8640.jpg - partial front view

Observation:

The entire observation was made from inside the Anderson residence. The bird was perched in a Bradford pear tree just outside the breezeway door, allowing observers to watch from a concealed location not more than 15 feet from the bird. It was in the tree when I arrived, and it remained there for over an hour until it flew to the back of the yard at approx. 9:50. I left shortly thereafter.

Discussion:

The attached photos should speak for themselves, which were taken through the breezeway door window.

There are not many birds in North America with which this individual could be confused. Probably closest overall among North American birds would be a female mountain bluebird, but this is easily eliminated by the distinctive black and buffy wing pattern and complete lack of blue coloration. It is easily told from Northern Mockingbird also by the black and buffy wing pattern and the bold white eyering. Gray Catbird is also eliminated by the wing pattern, the lack of a black crown, and the lack of rufous undertail coverts. All of these features are obvious in the attached photos.

This leaves Townsend's Solitaire as the only possible identification.

Prior experience:

I have seen a handful of Townsend's Solitaires in the western North America at various times during the year, including sightings in California, Washington state, and Alberta, Canada. This is my second record in Pennsylvania.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) near Morgantown, Berks County, PA, 30-Dec-2006

Observer:

Geoff Malosh
450 Amherst Ave.
Moon Township, PA 15108-2654
412.269.1413
pomarine@earthlink.net

Facts:

Temperature: 45 F
Wind: calm
Sky: mostly clear
Time: 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Equipment: Leica 10x42 BN binoculars
Camera: Canon 20D with 100-400mm f/5.6L lens
Photos or audio recordings: 3 photos submitted
Accompanying observers: four others
Documentation date: January 10, 2007
Submission date: January 10, 2007

Photos:

- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006a7s_8581.JPG - flight shot showing outer rectrices
- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006c7ps_8608.JPG - front view showing the bird regurgitating a berry seed
- WesternKingbirdDec-30-2006d7ps_8612.JPG - front view

Location:

In a small neighborhood on Shiloh Road north of Morgantown, just north of the second overpass over I-176.

Observation:

The bird was found flycatching and feeding on berries in several yards in the Shiloh Road neighborhood. Local homeowners allowed access to their properties, and I was able to observe the bird from a range of 25 to 150 feet for a period of about 1 hour until I left the scene. The bird seemed in good health and was very active.

There were four other birders who observed the bird during my stay at the location.

Discussion:

The photos attached clearly show one of the "yellow-bellied" kingbirds--largish flycatcher with yellow underparts, gray head, darker gray/green back, dark gray/brown wings, dark tail, etc. The white outer rectrices, most visible in the blurry flight shot attached, are diagnostic of Western Kingbird and eliminate all other similar *Tyrannus* flycatchers.

Prior experience:

I have seen many Western Kingbirds in the western United States and in Florida. This is my second record for Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Townsend's Solitaire (Myadestes townsendi)

Date of Sighting: 31 December 2006 to 3 February 2007

Location: ERIE

County : FAIRVIEW TOWNSHIP

Observer(s): Mark Anderson mobs

Date of Submission: 2007

Submitted by: T J. McWilliams, M Fialkovich, G Malosh

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

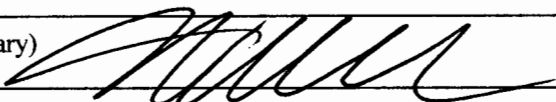
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
Stanley B. Cowiter	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

12/6/07