

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE  
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

7 February 2002

Donald O. Oesterling  
P.O. Box 125  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Dear Mr. Oesterling,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Swainson's Warbler at Celery Swamp on 9 May 1998. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted -- by a very close margin -- not to accept this record.

Members were divided in their opinions, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly explains the long delay until we are announcing our decision). The final vote was five in favor of acceptance and two not in favor. The Committee's bylaws require a minimum 6-1 vote to accept a record.

The two dissenting members felt that the bird was probably a Swainson's Warbler but were concerned that the description did not cover enough details of this species and thus did not completely rule out other warblers such as Orange-crowned or female Black-throated Blue with its white wing patch obscured.

As a result of falling short one vote from acceptance, the record was placed in the Committee's Class IV-A: "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of an observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt."

The Committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean the bird was not a Swainson's Warbler, but rather that a majority did not consider other species ruled out conclusively.

We hope this does not discourage you from submitting documentation of rarities in the future.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:  
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record No. 756-01-1998

756-01-1998

## Rare Bird Alert

### Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of rare or unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all except as a guideline. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

PLEASE PRINT IN BLACK INK OR TYPE. Attach original field notes, drawings, photos, etc., if possible.

1. Common and scientific name of bird:

Swainson's Warbler - *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 adults in breeding plumage):

1 Adult, apparently in breeding plumage. Sex & age unknown.

3. Location (include specific County in State/Province, distance to nearest town, road, or other mappable landmark):

Definite white eye stripe & dark cap. A dark bird with dingy white. Mercer county, Pa. Along Brent Road off Rte 258 at Celery Swamp. (The first pull off.) North and West of N. Liberty.

4. Date and time observed: 5-9-98 at 1:00 P.M. (approx.)

5. Reporting observer and address:

Donald O. Oesterling  
P.O.Box 125  
Slippery Rock, Pa. 16057

6. Other observers:

No.

7. Weather conditions:

overcast

8. Light conditions:

Fair

9. Optical equipment:

Nikon 10X50SF Lookout II

10. Distance to bird:

20 to 25 feet.

11. Duration of observation:

2 to 3 minutes.

12. Habitat (be specific):

Edge of swamp next to parking area.

12. Description: (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include, if possible the characteristics listed below. Try to describe anything that might help to confirm the identification.)

Saw bird fly into low branch of tree and watched bird dig into tent caterpillar nest with beak and remove several caterpillars devouring same before flying away.

a. Initial impressions and circumstances. Bird Watchers Digest. I had just been reading feature story in [redacted] and couldn't believe I was seeing what I was seeing, but the story and pictures were so vivid in my mind that I'm sure of what I saw.

b. Plumage patterns and colors:

Definite white eye stripe with dark (rusty) cap. Non-descript dark body and wing color with dinghy white blotches on breast. Did not see any wing bars.

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c. Sex and age of bird:

Not known

d. Size and shape of bird:

5 inches. Looked similar to Worm eater.

e. Bill shape, length, color(s):

Bill longer and slender and appeared to be light brown.

f. Voice (song/calls):

Did not hear it.

g. Behavior:

Observed it fly into tree at the tent. It dug into the nest and removed several caterpillars and then flew away.

h. Association with other species:

No other birds observed at that time.

i. Eye color:

Could not really see.

j. Length and color of legs:

Light colored legs perhaps 1".

k. Other physical characters:

Quite dark, but the white eye stripe and cap were very vivid.

13. How were similar species eliminated?

The only other bird I considered was the Worm eating Warbler and this one had the white eye stripe and cap which I saw clearly.

14. Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?

NO

15. Previous experience with this and similar species.

None.

16. List any books or references used in identification:

Audubon Soc. Encyclopedia, Bird Watchers Digest, Nat. Geo. Field guide.

a. at time of observation:

Nat. Geo. Soc. Field guide.

b. after observation:

as above.

17. This description was written from: \_\_\_\_\_ notes made during observation;   x   notes made after observation; \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

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18. Are you positive of your identification? 99% If not, explain:

Please attach any photographs, as well as a copy of sketches and notes take at the time of the observation.

Name of Observer: Donald O. Oesterling

Observer's Address: P.O.Box 125

Slippery Rock., Pa. 16057

Phone Numbers: Day 724-794-4789 Evening same Fax none

E-mail Address: No

Signature: Donald O. Oesterling

Date and time of writing this account: 7-10-98, 9:30 A.M

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round One**

Species: Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

Date of Sighting: 9 May 1998 to 9 May 1998

Location: CELERY SWAMP

County: MERCER

Observer(s): Donald Oesterling

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Donald Oesterling

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO NO SPECIMEN NO RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abs tain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman			X					
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes			X					
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS			4	1	1			1
DECISION								

Comments: 4/2/1 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 1/14/01

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round Two**

Species: Sweainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

Date of Sighting: 9 May 1998 to 9 May 1998

Location: CELERY SWAMP

County: MERCER

Observer(s): Donald Oesterling

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Donald Oesterling

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

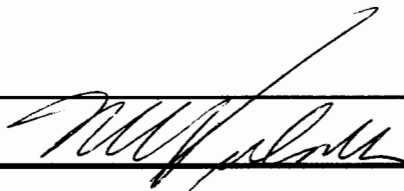
Specimen: No

Recording: No

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

Comments: 5/2/0 rejected

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 10/2/01

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round One**

Species: Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

Date of Sighting: 9 May 1998 to 9 May 1998

Location: CELERY SWAMP

County: MERCER

Observer(s): Donald Oesterling

Date of Submission: 1998

Submitted by: Donald Oesterling

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES      PHOTO NO      SPECIMEN NO      RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abs tain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman			X					
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes			X					
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid				X				
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS			4	1	1			1
DECISION								

Comments: 4/2/1      2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 1/14/01