







Cassini/Tanager. art

782-02-1989
4/1/90

WESTERN TANAGER IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

On December 30, 1989, while participating with Christopher Walters in the Valley Forge Christmas Bird Census, we found in Whip^tpain Township an apparent female Western Tanager, Piranga ludoviciana. A careful description of the bird, which fed frequently on the fruits of crab apple trees along the edge of a young, second growth deciduous woods about 2:00 pm, was made on the spot. After tentatively identifying the bird by later consulting appropriate field guides, a second observation an hour later convinced us of the correct identification. We then alerted the local birding community and reported the bird that evening at the round-up of the Valley Forge Audubon Society. The bird has subsequently been seen and often photographed by many individuals. It was last reported to us in the same location on January 21, 1990.

Some photographs of the bird reveal a dull red color on some of the forehead feathers, a fact which has caused some to speculate that the bird is a winter plumaged male. It seems to us, however, that the color is merely due to reddish staining from the ripe crab apple fruits to which the bird frequently returned to feed. No red was observed in the field and no red coloring in any of the photographs examined revealed red on the chin, a trait indicated for the winter male. A detailed description of this female Western Tanager has been filed with the Pennsylvania Rare Bird Committee.

Well documented reports of Western Tanager in Pennsylvania are rather rare. The following six have come to my attention:

782-02-1989

1. Scranton, Lackawana Co. February 22-March 9, 1952. Sight record.
(Earl Poole 1964 Birds of Pennsylvania, p. 61)
 2. Butler, Butler Co. August 28, 1958. Sight record. (Ibid)
 3. New Bloomfield, Perry Co. September 26, 1959. Sight record. (Ibid)
 - 4a. Birmingham Meeting House, Chester Co., December 14, 1959. Photograph.
(Ibid)
 - b. Westtown, Chester Co. "to February 3, 1960. Poole states that 4a and 4b may be the same bird. (Ibid)
 - c. near West Chester, Chester Co. "One male bird was seen... in several feeder areas from December 9, 1959 to January 14, 1960...banded and photographed." (West Chester Bird Club 1979, Annotated List of Chester County Birds, 3rd edition, p 41.)
- ↳ 6. Ambler, Montgomery Co., December 21-24, 1974. Sight record.
Cassinia 55 (1975):37.
5. West Grove, Chester Co., December 15, 1973 - January 29, 1974.
(West Chester Bird Club, op cit)

- Edward D. Fingerhood, 541 W. Sedgwick St.,
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Western Tanager**

Date of Sighting: **30 December 1989 to 21 January 1990**

Observer(s): **Ed Fingerhood, Christopher Walters**

Date of Submission: **1990**

Submitted by: **Ed Fingerhood, Christopher Walters**

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	7						
DECISION	X						

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

B. M. Haas

Date:

3/7/92