

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

859- 01- 2003

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
Subspecies, if known —

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) male

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): adult breeding

DATE OF OBSERVATION 13 May 2003 TIME about 5:15 pm to 6:00 pm

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Tobyhanna, PA - Coolbaugh township - Monroe county

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) in backyard of Betty Knecht's home on Main Street in Tobyhanna.

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Brian Hardiman
Address PO Box 106
City Columbia State NJ ZIP 07832
e-mail (optional) hardiman@nac.net phone (optional) (908) 496-8460

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you): —

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) mowed yard with scattered trees & open grassy areas, other houses nearby. Stream & marshy area also nearby.

DISTANCE TO BIRD observed bird at distances ranging from 20 feet to 100 feet.

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) mostly cloudy skies, windy & cold, temperature mid to low 50's F. sun hidden behind clouds.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Zeiss 7x42 binoculars

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual):

Noticeably larger than nearby Red-winged Blackbirds & Brown-headed Cowbirds but with similar proportions. Yellow on head covers head completely, from back of head & nape extending to throat & breast. Rest of body black except white edge showing on wings at rest, white wing patches showing in flight. Large, pointy black bill. Small amount of black around eyes with black lore on otherwise yellow head.

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) First observed perched in tree above house with feeders, bird was alone. Slowly worked its way down tree moving from branch to branch before reaching feeder. Perched on tube feeder, feeding. Observed bird at two different feeders. Brown-headed Cowbirds, Common Grackles, & Red-winged Blackbirds (single numbers of each species) feeding nearby on ground. At one point joined these other species & foraged in mowed grassy yard with them.

VOCALIZATIONS

Vocalized infrequently only when perched alone in tree above house with feeders -- harsh, screeching, rasping calls.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:

Photograph _____ Video recording _____ Audio recording _____ Drawing _____

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

e-mail (optional) _____

phone (optional) _____

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

General condition _____

If collected (by permit), location of specimen if known _____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others)

A similar species that I am familiar with is the South American species, Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Agelaius icterocephalus*), which is smaller & has an all black body with no white in the wings.
~~Also, the yellow head is not as extensive as the yellow on the yellow-headed Blackbird~~

DISCUSSION – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

First seen at feeders on 12 May 2003 by homeowner Betty Knecht & daughter Caroline Phillips. They referred to "National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds (Eastern Region)" & identified bird as a yellow-headed Blackbird. I was then called at my workplace – Monroe County Environmental Education Center – on 13 May by Caroline Phillips & I arrived at their house that evening when I was able to see the bird.

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES

Observed Yellow-headed Blackbirds at different times on trips to the western United States. Observed the similar Yellow-headed Blackbird on two different trips to Trinidad.

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? (why or why not)

Yes, bird is nearly unmistakable in adult male plumage.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation

none

After observation

"National Geographic Society Field Guide to North American Birds" & "Sibley Guide to Birds" & French's "A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad & Tobago"

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 14 May 2003

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER

B. Had-

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

Date of Sighting: 12 May 2003 to 13 May 2003

Location: TOBYHANNA

County : MONROE

Observer(s): Brian Hardiman

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: Brian Hardiman

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Armstrong R. Winters			X X					
D. Heathcote			X					
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary)

Date:

3/1/05