

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555

September 26, 1997

Grace Randolph
1060 Country Hill drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111-4658

Dear Grace,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Brewer's Blackbird you saw in Hershey on 21 January 1996 to P.O.R.C. After careful review, we regret that we are unable to accept this record. This record caused some interesting discussion among the members. Most members felt that the plumage described was consistent with a Brewer's Blackbird, however, some members were concerned that the description submitted lacked specific details regarding bill structure and tail shape two important field characteristics used in separating Brewer's Blackbird from other blackbirds and grackles. Because of this, the committee decided to err on the side of caution rather than accept this report.

This of course, does not mean that the bird was not a Brewer's Blackbird, merely, that the record is not beyond reasonable doubt for acceptance

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

Nick Pulcinella
Chairman

Record # 861-01-1996

861-01-1996

PORC

Brewer's blackbird documentation as submitted by Grace Randolph

Observer: Grace Randolph
Date: January 21, 1996
Place: 6418 Schoolhouse Rd.
Hershey, Southern Dauphin County

This blackbird was under and around a backyard feeder, east of Route 743 and south of Gates Rd. I viewed the bird for about ten minutes, using 10 x 40 binoculars from a distance of about 50 feet. Light was adequate and I had a clear view of the bird while it was perched in a fruit tree at eye level. The bird was black all over (beak, feet, head, back, wings, and tail) except for yellow eyes. The head, back and wings were glossy with a blue-purple sheen. It was smaller than a grackle. When it flew to the ground to continue feeding under the feeder, I could compare it to a male brown-headed cowbird that was also feeding there. The cowbird was noticeably smaller, and its head was brown. I concluded that I was seeing a Brewer's blackbird because of its size, eye-color, lack of any rust color on its feathers, and the purplish sheen especially on the head. There was absolutely no chevron on the wing either when it was perched or when it flew. The tail was not keel-shaped like a grackle's.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Brewer's Blackbird (Euphagus cyanocephalus)**

Date of Sighting: **21 January 1996 to 21 January 1996**

Location: **HERSHEY**

County: **DAUPHIN**

Observer(s): **Grace Randolph**

Date of Submission: **1996**

Submitted by: **Grace Randolph**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas				X				
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams				X				
P. Schwalbe				X				
S. Feldstein						X		
TOTALS			3	3		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

2-22-97