

April 8, 2005

Michael Schall
1149 Mickley Ave.
Whitehall PA 18052

Thank you for sending in the description and photos of the Oriole you saw at Martin's Creek Power Plant in October of 2002. The committee was nearly split on it's opinion regarding this record, with 3 members voting to place it in category 1 or 3 (an accepted record) and 4 voting for category 4. There seemed to be some discrepancies between the photos and the description. Several members thought the photo was more similar to an adult male Bullock's than anything else but the description seemed to pertain to a female or immature bird. This was the main source of confusion for the members who voted not to accept the record. In the written description you mentioned an orange tint to the breast, and face. This feature is often cited as a good way to exclude Baltimore Oriole when dealing with a very pale individual. Adult males of both species of course do show much orange in the face and breast, and to my eye this is a better match for the bird in the photo. However your description of the belly, head, and back seem to rule out an adult bird. This discrepancy does lead me to to consider the possibility of an abberantly plumaged bird, perhaps a young male with an unusually large amount of white in the wing? Ultimately though it is just not possible to reconcile the photo and description confidently enough to put a name on the bird.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

P.S. The other 2 records you sent in a being sent around to the committee for another round of voting. One of the pages of these became lost has they made the rounds. These were copies of course not you original description, sorry for the delay.









874A-01-2001

State/Regional Bird Records Committee

Rare Bird Report Form

Species: Bullock's Oriole Date: 10 / 22 / 2001

Number-Age-Sex: (1) Female Time: 0800 (STO)

Location: near Martins Creek (PP2) Power Plant in Lower Mount Bethel Township
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Habitat: roadside, mixture of shrubs & small trees surrounded by tall grass & weeds

Weather Conditions: mostly sunny, dense morning fog had just
burned off. very warm morning, light wind

Distance: 20 to 30 ft

Optical Equipment: 10 x 42 Pentax

Photographs Taken?: Yes: No:

Other Observers:

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail
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Experience of main observer: New LIFE SPECIES

BIRDING for nearly 20 years

Date Description Written: 10 / 22 / 01

REWRITE 10 / 24 / 01

Description of Sighting: (include size, shape, color patterns, song, call notes, behavior, and other diagnostic characteristics, but only what was actually observed in the field. Attach sketches, photographs, and additional sheets, if necessary.)

Please see my attached sheet for my description

EXPLANATION OF Photos:

PHOTO #1: This is the best quality photo. It shows the yellow head, dark eye, white belly, and large white color in wings.

PHOTO #2: Slightly out-of-focus, angle/direction of sun bad.

This photo shows the unmarked back. Crown looks very dark but was only slightly brownish. The rest of the head (sides, neck, and supercilium) are a bright yellowish color.

Similar Species / How Eliminated:

Please see my attached sheet for comparison to Baltimore Oriole

Name: Michael Schall Signature: Michael Schall Date: 12/4/01

Address: 1149 Mickley Rd. 610-435-2781
Whitehall, PA 18052 mdtjschall@yahoo.com

Mail this form along with accompanying (stapled) materials to:
Address of Committee inserted here.

Bullock's Oriole 10/22/01

Martins Creek Power Plant next to small flyash pond.

I saw a female oriole at close range, 20 to 30 feet away at 0800 (STD) on a mostly sunny day (early morning fog had lifted in this area). It was first seen on a tall weed, then flew into some green shrubs, sitting at the top. There is a nearby feeder (50yds) but don't know if that means anything. After a couple minutes, I went to my truck for a camera. The oriole was relocated 100yards down the road on some bare branches in a small tree (20 feet high) next to the road. A mockingbird landed in the same tree. It was 2 to 3 inches longer than the oriole. I took pictures and observed the bird for a total of about 3 minutes. It then flew off in the direction of the Delaware River, approx. 3/4 mile away.

Description

The head was a bright yellowish color with an orange tint; this included the throat, cheeks, sides, neck (front & back), and supercilium. The breast area also had a bright yellowish (orange tint) color. This yellowish color on the breast ended evenly across and the belly was white. The undertail coverts white to gray in color. The top of the head had a light brownish color. The section of the back above the wings was yellowish (not as bright as cheeks and breast) and had no markings or streaks. The eye was black and the bill straight and pointy. Wings were dark gray with 2 prominent wing bars. Edges of flight feathers white. The tail was yellowish on top.

Description continued:

and bottom with a square end. The bill had a purplish hue, probably from eating some type of berries in the area (possibly pokeberry). It did not call or show any odd behaviors.

Elimination of Baltimore Oriole (♀)

I got my comparison information from the Sibley and Stokes field guides. Sibley describes the sides of the neck and head of the Baltimore oriole as drab brownish while my bird had bright yellow sides on the neck and back of the head. The yellow on the breast runs into the belly area on the Baltimore while this bird had a white belly and the yellow color ending evenly across the breast. The Baltimore has dusky brown auriculars and supercilium that looks similar in color to the crown. My bird had bright yellowish auriculars and supercilium that contrasted with the crown. This oriole also had broad white edges on greater coverts that are lighter on Baltimore's. And the back was unmarked, where as the Baltimore would have marks or streaks.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

Date of Sighting: 22 October 2001 to 22 October 2001

Location: MARTIN'S CREEK POWER PLANT

County: NORTHAMPTON

Observer(s): Michael Schall

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Micahel Schall

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

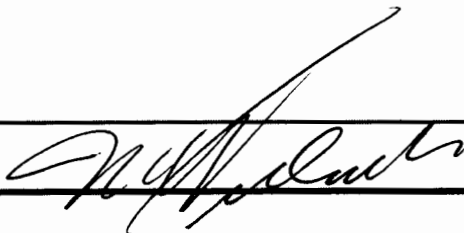
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead					X			
D. Heathcote D. Couchman	X							
P. Hess			X					
J. Stanley	X							
B. Reid <i>E. Witmer</i>				X				
R. Leberman					X			
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS	2		1	2	2			
DECISION								

Comments: 314

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

1/5/04