

887-01-1997

PA BIRDS - HOARY REDPOLL

On 14 December 1997, around 1030, Rick Koval, Jim Hoyson, Alan Gregory and John Heuges were searching for Redpolls in large reclaimed strip mine areas in southern Luzerne County. We arrived near the Luzerne/Schuylkill border with the nearest town being Onieda. The area contains vast amounts of Grey Birch. Alan had previously discovered a large redpoll flock of about 400 birds north of this area 3 days ago.

When we arrived and began to walk a stripping road, we encountered hundreds of redpolls feeding on the grey birch catkins and on the ground beneath the trees. Birds and tracks were everywhere. More flocks joined them and we estimated the total to be near 1200 to 1500 redpolls. Some lifted and flew to a stand of birch near us, we started looking through the flock. I quickly noticed a very white redpoll feeding 10 feet high on catkins. Surrounded by dozens of redpolls next to it, this bird appeared very white. I told everyone to focus on my bird and they easily were able to. We got as close as 30 feet and we stood in line with each other viewing at slightly different angles. The bird continued to feed without disturbance from us. We were able to talk about certain Hoary field marks and each of us confirmed what stood out from common redpoll. I noticed a clear unstreaked undertail covert. John picked up immediately the pushed in stubby bill when compared to the other redpolls. Alan and I noticed faint streaking on the upper flanks and the lower flanks were white and unstreaked. The breast was snow white with a hint of rose, not dark like the redpolls we compared it to. When the bird turned away from us, Jim and John noticed a unstreaked white rump not like the streaked darker rumps of the many redpolls next to it. The flock then lifted and flew into neighboring Schuylkill County. I believe this Hoary Redpoll was the *exilipes* subspecies due to the slight streaking on the upper flanks and the hint of rose on the breast. Total observation time was 7 to 10 minutes. Binoculars were Zeiss 10x40, Zeiss 7x42, Zeiss 7x42 and Swift 10x42. We all had seen a Hoary Redpoll before.

Descriptions :

A small finch ( redpoll species ) 5 1/2 inches long, with a black chin and red cap rules out house finch and siskin.

Bill was pale appeared stubbier (pushed in effect) when compared to the other redpolls. Breast was bright white with a hint of rose not the contrast red that the other redpolls exhibited. No streaking on the breast but some light streaking occurred on the upper flanks which was not dark streaked.. The other redpolls were streaked throughout the breast and flanks.

The undertail covert was pure white and unstreaked, the other redpolls had noticeable streaking on the undertail coverts.

The wings were brown with white showing on the median wing coverts and wing bars. The back light brown somewhat streaked from the nape.

The rump was bright white and unstreaked. The other redpolls that we observed along with it had dark streaked rumps. The tail was brown and forked like the

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common redpolls with it. The legs appeared dark like the common redpolls.  
We heard typical redpoll chattering and sweet calls among all of them.  
The bird was feeding on grey birch catkins in typical redpoll fashion.

Please use this write up for Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties.

Thank you,



Rick Koval  
305 William Street  
Plains, Pa 18705  
717 8294381 Email UNIBIRDER@aol.com

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round One**

Species: Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*)

Date of Sighting: 14 December 1997 to 14 December 1997

Location: ONEIDA

County: LUZERNE

Observer(s): Rich Koval, Jim Hoyson, Alan Gregory, John Heuges

Date of Submission: 1997

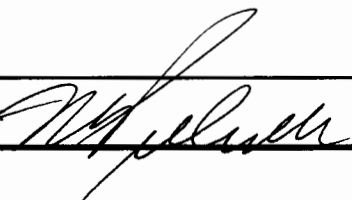
Submitted by: Rich Koval

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO No SPECIMEN No RECORD No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					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			6					1
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary)



Date: 1/14/01