

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE  
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

8 February 2001

Steve Farbotnik  
Box 604  
Revere, PA 18901

Dear Steve,

Thank you for submitting documentation for the (Black) Brant on 10 November 1997 and the Dickcissel on 26 October 1997 at Peace Valley Park (or perhaps your reports were forwarded to us from the county compiler). After careful review, the committee regrets that it cannot accept these records.

On the brant, a majority of members felt that it may have been a "Black" but that the description was not sufficient to separate the bird conclusively from a juvenile of another subspecies. Lack of white on the neck and extension of the dark color all the way to the undertail coverts indicate a juvenile, and other races may show this appearance.

On the Dickcissel, two of us did vote to accept it, but the other members felt that the description did not include sufficient detail for a complete evaluation and fair judgment.

The committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean that the bird was not the species reported, but rather that the committee believes the documentation submitted does not support the identification with certainty. We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you may find in the future.

Finally, the committee apologizes for the unacceptably long delay before all members were able to vote on the record. Circumstances beyond our control caused the problem, and we believe that we are back on a timely track.

Sincerely,

For the Committee:  
Paul Hess, Chairman

P.S. Beginning this year observers will receive postcards acknowledging that the committee has received their documentation. In addition, whereas observers formerly were notified only when reports were not accepted (in disappointing or irritating letters like this one), they will now receive cards announcing that their records *have* been accepted.

Records #114a-01-1997, #795-02-1997

114A-01-1997

Brant - Black

Mon. Nov. 10 1997

Sun<sup>day</sup> evening I got a call from a birder-friend telling me that there were a couple of Brants at the Sailor's Pt. area of Pease Valley. He remembered that I had mentioned needing one for the year for Black Sea.

The next morning after a short scan ~~of~~ hundreds of Canada geese they were ~~seen~~ <sup>about 200'</sup> from shore. Looking at them from up slope I noticed that one of them was much darker than the others. Black brant? Maybe just a color variation? I didn't know I never saw one before.

Later that day I picked up my <sup>Devick</sup> car and we drove down to the area again to see the bird. This time we found the birds grazing on a hillside just below the parking area less than a ~~100'~~ <sup>100'</sup> away. ~~Now I could see~~ <sup>the</sup> the whole bird was visible. We could see the dark color of the head and neck contrasting with the white underbelly and the way the underbelly contrasted, there was no white on the neck. Dev called Jason Hora to talk with about the bird. Jason was very interested and said that the Brants were already split in England and he would be in the U.S. soon too. He saw the next morning and positively identified it as a Black Brant. Unfortunately the bird left that day and wasn't seen again.

STEVE TARBOTNIK

Box 604

Roscoe PA 18453

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round One**

Species: Brant (Black) (*Branta bernicula nigricans*)

Date of Sighting: 10 November 1997

Location: PEACE VALLEY PARK

County: MONTGOMERY

Observer(s): Steve Farbotnik, Devich Farbotnik

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Steve Farbotnik, Devich Farbotnik

*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	
D. Couchman				X				
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess					X			
R. Ickes					X			
J. McWilliams				X				
B. Reid					X			
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS				2	4			1
DECISION					X			

Comments: *0/6/1*

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: *8/29/10*