

24 April, 1999

Nicholas J. Pulcinella  
210 Welcome Ave.  
Norwood, PA 19074

Dear Nick,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Richardson's Goose you saw at Springton Reservoir on 25 January, 1997. After careful review we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The committee felt that in spite of your clear discription and good photographs of a smaller race of *Branta canadensis*, it is not possible to separate *hutchinsii* and *parvipes* in the field and therefore this individual is unidentifiable. This does not mean of course that the bird was not a Richardson's Goose, merely that the record is not beyond reasonable doubt as to subspecies.

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,

For the Committee,  
Roy A. Ickes, Chairperson

Record # 116a-02-1997

P.S. I'm sure you'll recognize some of your language in this letter; I believe strongly in not re-inventing the wheel!

P.S. <sub>2</sub> # 375-03-1996 Sooty Tern seen on 7 September, 1996 not accepted.



**Richardson's Goose**  
*Branta canadensis hutchinsii*

**Date:** 25-26, January 1997  
**Location:** Springton Reservoir, Newtown Township, Delaware County.

On 25-26 January 1997, I observed a goose of one of the small races of Canada Goose at Springton Res. The bird was associating with a flock of about 400 Canada Geese.

**Description.**

**Size:** A small goose that in all respects looked like a small version of a Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*). The general size was slightly larger than a Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) but significantly smaller than a Canada Goose. When flying with other geese, to the naked eye it did not stand out as being significantly smaller, but with binoculars the size difference was apparent.

**Head:** The forehead had a steep angle and the crown was flat while the nape was round. The white chin patch was similar to that of a Canada goose.

**Upperparts:** Generally brownish-black similar to a Canada Goose.

**Underparts:** The neck and breast were darker brown in comparison to the color of a Canada Goose. There was not a white neck ring at the upper breast.

**Bill:** The bill was small and conical reminding me of the same type of bill on a Ross's Goose (*Chen caerulescens*)

**Voice:** The bird was heard to call only once. The call sounded similar to the "honk" of a Canada Goose except that it was higher pitched and lacked the loud resonance of a Canada Goose.

**Familiarity with species:** I am very familiar with the nominate Canada Goose. I have only one previous first hand experience with a small race of Canada Goose and that was at Marsh Creek SP in Chester County in 1975.

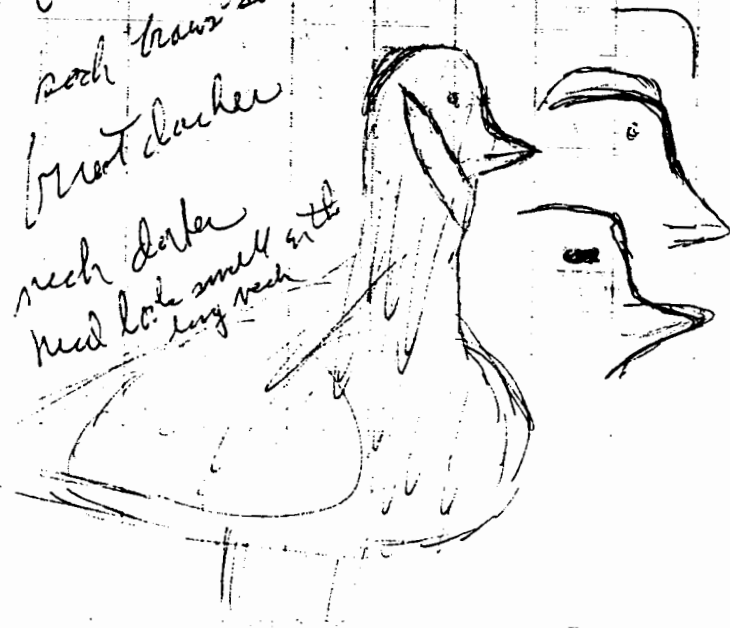
**Separation to race:** Separation from similar races is difficult if not impossible in some cases as there is some intergradation between the races and some measurements overlap. I think I can rule the race *C. minima* which is supposedly Mallard size and also a bird of the west coast, though this in itself does not rule this race. The bird I saw was slightly larger than a Mallard. I think the most difficulty is separating *C. hutchinsii* from *C. parvipes* (Lesser Canada Goose) which is supposedly the size of a Snow Goose. The bird I saw was not the size of a Snow Goose. In addition, other field marks that are to help separate *hutchinsii* from *parvipes* is the shorter neck and steeper forehead both of which I feel the bird I saw had.

Nick Pulcinella  
201 Elm Avenue  
Swarthmore, PA 19081

cc. PORC w/ photos  
David Cutler - Audubon Field Notes w/ photos  
Al Guarente - County compiler for Pa Birds.

Copy of  
original field notes

1 up black  
bill black  
neck brown - somewhat a Cu.  
front darker  
neck darker  
head like small with  
long neck



large than  
size of mallard  
further steep  
sharp down like Canada  
bill - short  
white throat patch



NO neck collar

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Canada (Richardson's) Goose (*Branta canadensis hutchinsii*)

Date of Sighting: 25 January 1997 to 26 January 1997

Location: SPRINGTON RESERVOIR

County: DELAWARE

Observer(s): Nick Pulcinella

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Nick Pulcinella

Written Description: YES

Photo: YES

Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas								X
P. Schwalbe			X					
K. Parkes	X							
R. Ickes				X				
P. Hess						X		
J. McWilliams	X							
T. Floyd						X		
TOTALS	2		1	1		2		1
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*F C Haas*

Date:

*4-19-99*