

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2018-11-21 15:15:53
Observer's Name	Paul Heveran
E-mail	birdmeister.paul@gmail.com
Observer's Address	1012 Andrews Ln Pennsburg Pennsylvania 18073 United States
Names of additional observers	Helen Heveran
Species (Common Name)	Dark-eyed Junco
Species (Scientific Name)	Junco hyemalis
Subspecies (if known)	J.h. oreganus
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Immature, possibly 1st-winter female
Observation Date and Time	11-20-2018 10:20 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50105194
County	Montgomery
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Pennsburg
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Andrews Lane
Habitat	Residential neighborhood, approximately 5 acres of young cedar-deciduous thicket across the street. Mix of a few young deciduous and coniferous trees on property, including 9 closely-spaced 20+-foot Blue Spruce trees.
Distance to bird	15-50 feet
Viewing conditions	Overcast, but decent lighting
Optical equipment used	Zeiss Conquest HD 10x42 binoculars

Description	<p>First spotted on the ground under feeders with other juncos. I immediately knew what it was when I saw it. This bird was the same size and shape as the surrounding juncos. Its dark gray "hood" contrasted sharply with its white belly and orange-buff flanks. Its back and wings were a similar color to the flanks, but a bit darker. The bird had some brown on the crown which led down onto the back and wings. The bird showed a slight black tip to the bill, which may or may not be a clue to "Oregon" over "Slate-colored". I have seen at least one picture of a "Pink-sided" with black bill tip, so it's probably not exclusive to "Oregon". Based on the fact that its hood was gray and not black, and that the crown showed a good amount of brown, I think this was an immature, possibly a 1st-winter female. It was easily picked out without binoculars at a range of 50 feet or so. At one point it came in to the patio where I got excellent looks at about 15 feet away!</p>
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	<p>The bird was first spotted on the ground below the feeders with other juncos. It fed for a few minutes, briefly coming in to the patio about 15 feet away. It flew out to a viburnum bush on the edge of the property, but returned for a few minutes to feed under the feeders again. The bird was last seen in the same viburnum bush after 15-20 minutes total of observation.</p>
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	<p>Obviously a junco, with white tail sides, pink bill, dark gray head, and white belly. All other sparrows and finches ruled out by combination of pink bill, dark head with no face pattern, and white tail sides. "Slate-colored" and "White-winged" subspecies were eliminated on lack of white wing bars and extensive orange-buff color in flanks and on back/wings. "Pink-sided" and "Cassiar" should show less contrast between dark head, white belly, and orange-buff flanks. "Pink-sided" should also show more extensive buffy flanks and possibly a paler head. "Gray-headed" and "Red-backed" would show an obvious dark mask, a well-defined reddish patch on the back, and no buffy flanks.</p>
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	<p>There have been a good number of Western rarities, especially passerines, reported in the Eastern US this fall. Strong W winds earlier this month may have contributed to this bird's being here.</p>
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	<p>The combination of field marks on this bird leave very little doubt in my mind that I saw an "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco.</p>
During	<p>None</p>
After	<p>The Sibley Guide to Birds of North America</p>
Supporting evidence (check all that apply)	<p>Photograph</p>
Click to edit	<p>PORC-webform00055</p>