

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-12-08 07:52:44
Observer's Name	Barbara Stone
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Phone	5708792421
Observer's Address	32250 State Route 171 Susquehanna PA 18847 United States
Names of additional observers	Nancy VanCott, Joyce Stone, Jerry Skinner, Evan Mann, Dave Andre, Charles Denkenberger, Deborah Busby, Douglas Sheldon, Kevin Raymond
Species (Common Name)	Great Blue Heron (White Form)
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Subspecies (if known)	occidentalis
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Not known
Observation Date and Time	07-23-2017 7:10 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38296203
County	Susquehanna
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Great Bend Township
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	East Great Bend Swamp
GPS coordinates of sighting	N 41.581391 W75.4359.84
Habitat	A beaver swamp with varying levels of standing water bordered by road frontage, railroad bed, standing trees and shrubs
Distance to bird	Views at the swamp were from the roadside with the bird's distance varying between 100-325 feet away
Viewing conditions	Overcast and cloudy on 7/23, partly cloudy on 7/24

Optical equipment used	Bird was viewed through many brands of binoculars, most photos taken with superzoom point and shoot cameras, spotting scopes used on the second day of observation.
Description	The first impression was of an all-white great blue heron. Blue forms are common in the county and at this location, and birders are familiar with the species. We occasionally see great egrets in late summer (although none were reported this year). There was nothing "egret-dainty" about this bird. The overall size and heavy bill said GBHE. The upper mandible was blue-grey most prominently toward the face. The lower mandible was a yellow/orange that brightened towards the tip. The legs were pale colored. At times they seem grey, at other times showing a yellowish tinge. The legs seemed darker toward the feet, possibly due to wetness or muddiness.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	The bird was seen standing in open, shallow water, standing on fallen logs, standing on low tree branches. It was occasionally seen flying, once at the same time as a blue form that swooped at it as if to chase it off.
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	Size, bill and leg color separated this bird from GREG.
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	<p>There are sixteen eBird checklists and eleven eBird photos available. There are scores of additional photos available.</p> <p>A bit of chronology: After the 7/23 sighting, a number of local birders viewed the bird together as a group the next day. We later heard from non-birding members of a road crew who had been working in the immediate area that they had been seeing the bird since 7/15. The bird disappeared for about a month, with one interesting, but unconfirmed report. A non birder described a large white heron being present on a Brushville swamp (6.4 mi away) daily during this time period. On 8/23 the bird reappeared at the East Great Bend swamp, and was viewed there regularly until 9/25, which is the date it was last seen. During this 8/23-9/25 period, the water level was much lower on the swamp and birders began finding the bird at times standing in the shallow edges of the Susquehanna River, less than one half mile from the swamp.</p> <p>This report is submitted by Evan Mann on behalf of Barbara Stoner, first person to see and identify the heron.</p>
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	Yes. It did not fit the description of any other species. Photos were posted on a number of birding FB pages and all agreed with it being a white form GBHE.
During	Sibley phone app with comparison of GBHE and GREG
After	Field guides, FB pages
Supporting evidence (check all that apply)	Photograph
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