

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2013-08-06 22:52:11
Observer's Name	Matt Wlasniewski
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Observer's Address	Street Address: 21 Scenic Drive City: Hamburg State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 19526 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Ken Lebo was watching the water from opposite shore on West Shore Drive. I had the best view.
Species (Common Name)	Wilson's Storm-Petrel
Species (Scientific Name)	Oceanites oceanicus
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	NA
Observation Date and Time	10-30-2012 10:00 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Not yet (please do, eBird is great!)
County	Berks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Route 73, Leesport, PA
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Lake Ontelaunee from fisherman's pull off looking North Northeast towards Maiden Creek Station cove.
Habitat	Fresh water lake; reservoir
Distance to bird	300 yards approximately. This is my best estimate.
Viewing conditions	Rainy and windy. Tropical Storm Sandy had arrived in Berks County and was churning up the lake and dropping 'storm birds' in Berks County and Pennsylvania.
Optical equipment used	Vortex Diamondback 8x42 binocular.Kowa Scope 30-60 zoom.
Description	Small waterbird. Color: Dark body with white rump patch; dark underwings; no light feathers on belly or head, dark tail was even, appeared squared off; I saw the legs/feet trailing beyond the tip of the tail.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

I arrived at the fisherman's pull-off during heavy rain and strong wind. I had a trash bag wrapped around my scope and set up my tripod under the trees. I scanned the lake in front of me first and then off to the northeast toward the shore along West Shore Drive where I found Black and White-winged Scoters and Bufflehead. I then panned to the right with my bins to the cove at Maiden Creek Station. With my bins, I saw a small dark bird with its wings uplifted, dancing on the water. The books call it pattering. I was able to find the bird with my scope. Power at 30x. I tried higher power but would lose the bird. The bird then lifted up and moved along the water about 10-15ft above it. I thought once it was going to sit on the water but it didn't. The winds seemed to be pushing it along towards the cove. I watched it for about a minute and a half and then it gained elevation and was hard to follow as it went into the cove at Maiden Creek. I tried to find it again with my bins but couldn't. I moved to the larger parking lot to my west on 73 but didn't find it coming by. I had to go to work so I left Lake O after a quick stop at the dam. I did not want to go to work with all the excitement taking place.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Birds compared:
White-faced Storm-Petrel has a distinctive plumage with light belly and underwing.
European Storm-Petrel has white line in its underwing which my bird did not.
Leach's Storm-Petrel has a forked tail and is a larger bird. I know there were some of these found later at the dam.
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel is larger than the Wilson's.
I am not familiar with the flying characteristics of the last two petrels.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

I know that Leach's and Band-rumped are similar in appearance to the Wilson's. I am basing my identification on the behavior of the bird...pattering on the water, the way it fluttered on wing and then my certain spotting of the legs extending beyond the end of the tail which did not appear notched.
I wrote down notes when I got to work but then managed to lose them. I found them a couple of weeks ago in a bag I keep books and such things in. When I read the piece in PA Birds on Hurricane Sandy, I thought I should submit this report.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

I have no photo for this bird but am pretty sure it was a Wilson's. I have seen them from the ferry at Cape May and on pelagics from Cape May and Delaware.

During

None.

After

Sibley's and The Crossley Guide.

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