

Submission Date	2013-03-10 00:56:09
Observer's Name	Bill Etter
E-mail	billetter01@gmail.com
Phone	2159643613
Observer's Address	Street Address: 407 S Cigar Rd City: Northampton State / Province: United States Postal / Zip Code: 18067 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Rick Wilt ra ut
Species (Common Name)	Cave Swallow
Species (Scientific Name)	Petrochelidon fulva
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult
Observation Date and Time	10-31-2012 11:00 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/pa/view/checklist?subID=S11924534
County	Bucks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Haycock Twp
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Lake Nockamixon / Nockamixon State Park
Habitat	Large rural lake
Distance to bird	Near = 50 feet, far = quarter to half mile
Viewing conditions	overcast but clear
Optical equipment used	8x Celestron binoculars, good Nikon 24-30x scope
Description	There were hundreds of Tree swallows feeding over lake Nockamixon at any given time following the passage of Hurricane Sandy, providing an excellent opportunity to look for anything "different"! I was able to pick this bird out while scoping the swallows from the marina parking lot. It was initially very far out over the water, but given favorable lighting conditions, it

was clearly a colorful bird, more typical of Barn, Cliff or Cave than of the abundant Trees. I was able to watch this bird for several minutes as it fed over the water and slowly moved toward the marina where I was parked near the water's edge. As it approached, I could see the rusty rump and blunt, concavely rounded tail feathers (immediately eliminating Barn). After following this bird for what seemed like an eternity, I was finally able to get a reasonably close head-on view of the forehead, which had a dark, cinnamon-red cast. I was further able to view the rump, which seemed quite rusty and dark to me, rather than buff or orange, raising speculation as to subspecies. In any case, the forehead of the bird was clearly a dark rust hue and the throat was pale, both of which eliminate Cliff swallow of any age.

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

Feeding with hundreds of Tree Swallows over surface of lake.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

See above. Details of forehead and throat definitively eliminate Cliff Swallow. Shape of tail eliminates Barn.

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

I recognize that identification of subspecies of vagrant Cave Swallows in our region is tricky at best, and poorly understood. Still, I feel that the coloration of this bird could be best described as rusty rather than cinnamon, especially the dark rump. I was not able to judge the hue of the belly and underparts well, or to obtain pics. The possibility that this bird was of the West Indies *fulva* race rather than of the conventionally presumed Mexican *pelodoma* race seems plausible to me given the passage of Hurricane Sandy, the history of that storm, and the details of my observations.

From my eBird report:

I've seen the Mexican subspecies in Texas and Mexico, and the Caribbean subspecies in the Dominican Republic; still, not being overly familiar, I feel that the overall darker hues of this bird's plumage indicate the latter.

Also (for what it's worth...): I ran into Rick Wiltraut a few minutes after leaving this bird; apparently while I was watching "my" swallow, he was out on the marina pier also watching a Cave Swallow. The bird I saw was mostly in the cove on the far side from the pier, so I'm not convinced we were watching the same bird. Later in the day, two birds identified as Cave Swallows were seen at the same time here by another party (Cameron Rutt and August Mirabella).

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

Yes...positive of species, hesitant on subspecies...

During

none

After

Mostly Sibley, plus various websites with information regarding identification of subspecies

