

Submission Date	2012-11-27 14:04:57
Observer's Name	Cameron Rutt
E-mail	cameronrutt@gmail.com
Observer's Address	Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Marshall Iloff, Tom Johnson, Doug Gochfeld, Frank Windfelder, George Armistead, Todd Fellenbaum, Martin Dellwo
Species (Common Name)	Sooty Tern
Species (Scientific Name)	Onychoprion fuscatus
Number of individuals	1
Have you submitted this to eBird?	Yes
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Juvenile
Observation Date and Time	10-30-2012 9:25 AM
County	Philadelphia
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Philadelphia
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Pennypack on the Delaware
Habitat	Seen flying over the Delaware River
Distance to bird	This bird was distant by the time Marshall Iloff phone it in to us (at least over the far - New Jersey - bank of the river, if not overland at this point)
Viewing conditions	Overcast
Optical equipment used	Swarovski EL 8.5x42 binoculars, Swarovski ST-80 scope, and a Canon 60D with a 400mm f/5.6L
Description	<p>My pictures of the bird were very poor, but pictures from Tom Johnson and Marshall Iloff show the bird much better than my views in the field.</p> <p>Essentially, an overall very dark larid in relatively high flight at some distance. The bird appeared to have very long, thin, and pointy wings, with a mostly blackish plumage, although through a scope, I could make out contrasting whitish underwing coverts. In photos, the bird's white lower belly and undertail coverts contrast with the blackish tail and dusky underparts; likewise, the dingy white underwing</p>

coverts contrast with blackish primaries. Lastly, the tail appeared relatively long in photos too.

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

Notably, although most of us unquestionably saw the bird in New Jersey, Marshall Iliff (standing along the opposite side of the river) mentioned that he initially found it in Pennsylvania with a flock of Laughing Gulls:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S11905436>

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Fortunately, juvenile Sooty Terns are more distinctive than adults; the largely dark head and underparts of a juvenile Sooty Tern quickly separate it from all ages of Bridled Terns. Additionally, the whitish underwing coverts and white lower belly/undertail coverts separate young Sooty Terns from Brown or Black Noddys. Black Terns have a very different shape with a short tail; shorter, broader wings; and also lack the whitish underwing coverts.

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

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/miliff/8170250158/> (the first in a series of five photos)
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bonxie88/8140285132>

All photos are of the same individual.

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

Yes

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Click to edit

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