

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2016-11-29 15:34:58
Observer's Name	Dave Grove
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Phone	7172585253
Observer's Address	865 Alexander Spring Road Carlisle PA 17015 United States
Names of additional observers	Paul Fritz, Gene Wagner, Joe Kelly
Species (Common Name)	Townsend's Solitaire
Species (Scientific Name)	Myadestes townsendi
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult plumage
Observation Date and Time	11-11-2016 2:40 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Not yet (please do, eBird is great!)
County	Cumberland/Perry
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Lower Frankford Township/Spring Toawn ship
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch
Habitat	Brushy tree adjacent to rockpile
Distance to bird	40 feet
Viewing conditions	partly cloudy, no viewing obstacles
Optical equipment used	3 Swarovski, 1 Leica binoculars
Description	Bird flew to top of a brushy tree just south of the hawkwatch. Recognizing that it was not a typical sighting, I called out to the others to check it out. It sat still for about two minutes before it flew up over the rockpile into trees on the Perry County side. It was well seen by all four of us. The white eye ring and white outer tail feathers were easily seen, but the outstanding mark was the buffy wing pattern. It was visible perched and while flying. The first impression was of a slim gray Robin. The bird was lighter than a Robin, but smaller than a Mockingbird and had no white wing patches. Mockinbirds are very rare on the ridge top.

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

The bird perched upright at the top of a small tree 40 feet from us. It made some small movements while remaining perched. It then flew.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Eliminating American Robin and Northern Mockingbird. It was paler than a Robin and did not have a red breast. The body was more slender than a Robin. There were no white wing patches as a mockingbird there was less contrast between the top and bottom as a Mockinbird would be. And in 30 years at the hawkwatch, I have not seen a Mocker on the ridgetop.

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

Paul Fritz just moved back to the area after 15 years in Alaska. He saw many Townsend's Solitaires during his time in Alaska. I had seen them in Alaska also. Joe had seen them in Montana and Gene had a life bird.

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

yes because of the wing pattern eliminating other probables and Paul's experience with the bird in Alaska

After

Sibley and Kauffman

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