

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-09-16 21:58:45
Observer's Name	Joshua Schulz
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Observer's Address	1 Groff Drive Ephrata Pennsylvania 17522 United States
Names of additional observers	Joshua Edward Schulz
Species (Common Name)	Cattle Egret
Species (Scientific Name)	Bubulcus ibis
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Immature
Observation Date and Time	09-09-2017 1:30 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39089245
County	Lancaster/Lebanon
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Stevens
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Middle Creek WMA, Stop 3
Habitat	Perched in a tree over grass near the far right pond
Distance to bird	200+ meters
Viewing conditions	Clear day with a little heat shimmer
Optical equipment used	Pentax PF 65-ED II w/ 20-60 zoom eyepiece
Description	Had a distant look at a small to medium sized white wader with a short dark bill and sharp looking angle where the bill meets the head due to raised feathers on the upper mandible and the protrusion of feathers on the lower mandible. No discernible difference in color between tip and base of bill. Appeared to be all white, consistent with a fledgling bird, potentially late changing? Initially considered Snowy Egret or Little Blue Heron but both would be ruled out by head and bill. Bird was hunched, so no observation of the neck length. Seen along the distant treeline on the right from stop 3, most likely in Lebanon but very close either way. Disappeared while I was looking at my phone and could not relocate.

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

The bird was only seen perched on a branch, hunched over, looking out over the pond.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Size and color of the bill along with overall size absolutely eliminate Great Egret. I expected Little Blue since at least one had been in the area since early August, but the profile of the head and uniform bill color led me to look at other options. Bill was much too short for snowy and it didn't have the slight, delicate look overall.

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

I would have preferred to see the bird in flight or at least lifting its head to show its neck to really nail down the ID. While I intend to keep the observation for my personal records, I admit that my certainty is not as high as it could be; especially since I believe it's especially unusual for a dark-billed individual to be around this late and there was a Little Blue sighting on ebird for Middle Creek only a little over a week prior, not to mention the distance of the observation.

During

Audubon Android App

After

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, MacaulayLibrary.org, Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds

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