

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Piping Plover Number: (leave blank)

Location: Gallipolis Ferry, WV (Mason Co) Date: Aug 14, 2016 Time: 6:00pm

Bird Seen: Aug, 6, 2016 To: Aug 18, 2016 Age/Sex: Adult

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.) A small plover, slightly larger than Least Sandpipers that were nearby (Aug 7) and close to the plover at times. Legs were orange and the bill was black. The grayish breast band was incomplete. The large dark eye was very evident. The orange legs ruled out Snowy Plover and Wilson's Plover. The bill was also too short for Wilson's Plover.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt) The bird was a pale gray color on back, wings (upper), head and breast band (incomplete) suggesting non-breeding plumage. The belly and chest were white. The pale gray back and wings ruled out Semipalmated Plover.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard: None

Description of behavior: The bird was feeding when observed on the 7th, 8th and 14th. It would feed, then run or walk a short distance and feed again. It stayed mostly along the mud/sand at the waterline, but would also work along the short grasses on the sand/mud spit (see photos).

Habitat: (General and Specific)

The bird was located in a sand and gravel pit that is mostly filled with water. The specific location was a sand/mud spit and shoreline along the south/^{east} side of the gravel/sand pit. The sand pit is about 1/2 mile from the Ohio River.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

The sand spit is ~300 yards from the observation point. I originally saw the bird as I was scanning the spit with my Kowa TSN-883 PROMINAR (Fluorite crystal) spotting scope set at 40x. Observed at 40-60x for ~1hr until Mike Griffith arrived to see it through my scope. Light was from behind and right on 7th. On morning of 8th, light was more from the right (morning light).

Previous experience with this species:

I have seen Piping Plover several times in six other states (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Mississippi and Texas). All observers had previous experience with this species.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

I have seen all the plovers in North America that are common. The bird was too small to be a golden plover or Black-bellied plover. The leg color ruled out Snowy and Wilson's Plover. The pale gray coloration of the back, wing and head ruled out Semipalmated, Snowy (could be close but normally darker), and Wilson's Plover.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

This bird was observed at ~6:30pm on August 7th and identified as a Piping Plover. Mike Griffith was called immediately and he arrived about 40min later and agreed with my identification. We texted David Patich, who went back with Mike and I to re-find the plover which we did. David agreed with the ID. While watching the Plover, Josh Holland arrived, saw the bird through my scope and also agreed. Shortly afterward, Derek Courtney arrived, saw the plover through his scope and photographed the Piping Plover. Mike Slaven saw the Piping Plover on the 13th and Mike Griffith, David Patich, Steve Wilson (Oak Hill, WV) and I observed the Piping Plover on the morning of the 14th. So far ~~seen~~ ^{seen} birders (at least) with previous experience with Piping Plover have seen the bird and agreed on the identification. Derek Courtney & David Patich took photographs that are enclosed with this submission. Both used digiscoping to capture their images.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:

I always carry a copy of the National Geographic field guide with me. While I was waiting for Mike Griffith to arrive, I took a look at the guide to remind me of the leg color of Snowy Plover (dark not orange). This did not influence my description.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

I observed the bird at ~6:30pm on the 7th, 8:00am on the 8th and ~9:00 AM on the 14th. I started with the description on Aug 9th & finished it today at ~6:45pm.

Name:

GARY O. RANKIN

Address:

Date:

Signature:

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