

Trumpeter Swan

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: The provenance of any Trumpeter Swan seen outside its normal range is always an issue. However, the bird lacked a band which would tend to indicate captive origin, and there was no other evidence to indicate that this was an escaped bird. Given that, I believe the bird is a wild vagrant. The other issue with this species is identity, due to its similarity to Tundra Swan. However, the description and photographs adequately rule out Tundra Swan based on the structure of this bird's bill and pattern of the plumage of the forehead.

CM2: The Tundra/Trumpeter Swan pair can be really complex to differentiate. Immature birds present an even more difficult challenge. Fortunately, this bird is mature enough to make identification more straightforward. The bill morphology is very well-documented and solid enough to lead to a Trumpeter Swan identification without much consternation. The issue here is provenance. The bird does not show any obvious signs of captivity. There are no bands, and the wings do not appear to be pinioned. Trumpeter Swan recovery efforts in the East have been successful and there are increasing numbers of valid sightings in nearby states. The timing is somewhat suspect in this regard, I must admit. But it is not unreasonable, especially if the bird is injured. I don't have a strong conviction on how to handle this bird to be honest. In spite of a personally conservative approach, I would look to a body like the ABA RSEC for guidance. Based on their precedent, I feel a vote FOR this record would be appropriate here.

CM3: The photodocumentation leaves no doubt to the identification. I see no reason that the bird should not be viewed as a wild individual. Due to the ever-increasing populations of the species in neighboring states, it is really only a matter of time before they become established in our state.

CM4: Excellent photos by an experienced WV birder. The submitter took time to photograph the front of the birds head. The pointed border, the area where the black beak and white head feathers come together was clearly shown. The submitter should be commended for his excellent photos. No yellow on the lores was seen. The second photo compares the size of the bird observed with nearby Canada Geese. I support this submission, as the bird is clearly identified by photos.

CM5: I vote to include the Cabell County sighting of the Trumpeter Swam record for the official State List. The TRUS was photographed which is acceptable by our bylaws. The written evidence provides some details of the found TRUS. The observer does include photographs to provide evidence of the birds' identity. The observer reports previous experience and his report does differentiate from the other swans. He did note other observers with experience who viewed and confirmed the identity after the initial posting. Therefore, this report in my opinion meets the standards set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List.

CM6: Nice photos for ID.

CM7: The key to identifying swans is the bill and head interface. The dark bill immediately rules out Mute Swan, leaving only Trumpeter and Tundra swans as the options for North America. The relatively wide connection of the black facial skin to the eye combined with the relatively flat, sloping forehead are indicative of a Trumpeter Swan. Thus, I agree with the identification.