

Eurasian Collared-Dove

Rejected 1 vote For, 6 votes Against

This record was discussed at the meeting. This was one of the cases where the Committee felt the Identification was likely correct, in an area that supported the sighting. However, the inherent uncertainty of a single observer sighting that consists solely of a heard only report without corroborating witnesses or evidence was too much for the majority of Committee Members to overlook.

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: It is difficult for me to evaluate a written description of a bird's call or song, especially in the situation where that evaluation could lead to the acceptance of a record of a rare bird to a state's bird records committee. I feel there is too much room for error, by both the observer and the evaluator. This is especially the case in this day and age when audio recordings are so prevalent in the birding community. Without an audio recording or any other evidence of the bird's presence such as a photograph or even thorough description based on careful observation, I must vote to reject the record.

CM2: These are the most difficult records for me personally to evaluate. I do not like supporting a record without physical evidence. In this instance, the heard-only nature of the sighting makes the decision more difficult. A few factors weighed heavily in my mind in this case. First, the sighting is an area that is natural for expansion of the existing Union population. Second, African Collared-Dove is a VERY infrequent escapee in WV, even more so in this rural area. And third, the observer was confident of the difference. Thus a vote for this record is warranted in my opinion. Though I certainly understand any hesitation others might have.

CM3: Rejected without commentary.

CM4: This birder has birding experience in WV, is a regular poster to eBird and the WV listserv, and is one of the top eBird listers in WV. The habitat for this sighting could be suitable for the species in question. The observer articulated his familiarity with the song of the species in question, as well as similar species. While the observer stated that this was an incidental observation, the fact that he invested about 15 minutes listening and scanning for the bird makes it a little more than an incidental observation. While all experienced birders make mistakes once in a while, I would like to give him the benefit of the doubt that he heard what he believed sounded like a Eurasian collared-dove singing. He articulated in words what he remembered hearing that day. He stated he had prior experience with this species. However, it is possible that

we sometimes hear what we want to hear, especially if we heard it before. However, I am not saying that he did not hear the bird.

To our knowledge, there was no follow up done in subsequent days to relocate the bird, or if so, the bird was not present. I understand this level of follow up is sometimes not possible. I appreciate the fact that a report was completed, as it alerts us to the possibility of future observations and expansion of the species in WV. The bird sang for about 15 minutes, but no recording was collected. Most birders are using smart phones that have built in microphone apps, so it was a lost opportunity that a song recording was not collected by the observer. It would have given his report concrete evidence that I believe should exist before a record is approved. A field sketch completed at the time of a bird sighting could possibly be acceptable evidence. Since there was no visual sighting, and no song recording collected despite the opportunity being there to do so, and there was no one with him to discuss opinions of the observation while it was occurring, this record lacks clean evidence I am looking for.

Even though I believe it is just a matter of time until this species frequents WV in more counties, I still believe we should have concrete evidence like a good visual sighting and photo, so there is no question about what bird was observed, or a sound recording. The observer noted that he located an eBird report from August 2019 in Greenbrier County of the Eurasian Collared-dove with a sound recording. I suggest the Committee contact the observer of the Aug 2019 eBird record, and ask that a report be submitted to the WVBRC utilizing that observers sound recording.

CM5: I vote against the Frankford, WV sighting of the Eurasian Collared-dove record for the Hypothetical List. The EUCD was only heard.. The written evidence provides a description of the song. The observer had previous experience and his report differentiated from the Mourning Dove which would be the common dove of the area and the African Collared-Dove. However, the reports lacks requirements of the By Laws Section V, Article E of physical evidence or have documentation of three observers. Therefore, this report does not meet the standards set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List and shall remain on the Review List. Kudos to the observer for recognizing that the EUCD is on the state review list and submitting the observation.

CM6: While I do believe this is what was heard, I don't believe there is enough there due to the distances involved and heard only.

CM7: This species is becoming more common in parts of WV and has a very distinct call that is unmistakable vocalization. The lack of a physical evidence makes the vote more difficult, especially in light the requirements of the Bylaws. Without a photo or recording, consideration of alternates possibilities is impossible. Thus, I change my vote to AGAINST the record.