

Pacific Loon

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: Based on the written description, photographs, and consensus among those who observed the bird, I don't think there's any question as to the bird's identity. However, the issue in this case is whether the bird was in West Virginia or Ohio waters. The report states that among several observers, there was uncertainty as to the position of the bird relative to the state boundary. However, in this report, the observer states that the bird was 30-50 yards from the West Virginia shoreline. I believe that puts the bird in West Virginia waters and if that is the case, then I vote to add Pacific Loon to the West Virginia checklist.

CM2: An exceptional sighting and 1st state record! This was very well documented by numerous observers. The photographs leave no doubt as to the identification and this was supported by the written description. The question of official state boundary is a thorny issue for birders, but the WV BRC follows official WV state law as to the definition of the state. In such a case maps may not align with the official legal definition. Likewise "local knowledge" is also often wrong. The BRC is lucky in this case that patient birders waited until the bird was unequivocally in WV state waters, making our evaluation of this record relatively easy. What birders choose to do with their personal list is their personal business and of no concern to the BRC. The state list is, however, important, and a careful and conservative approach is warranted. Congratulations to the initial observer and to those who continued to document its location!

CM3: Description and images consistent with Pacific loon. Numerous corroborators.

CM4: This record has outstanding documentation of this bird sighting including excellent photographs from 2 different photographers. At least 2 days of observations were made by a number of WV birders very familiar with the area. The observer did an excellent job articulating the differences between the Pacific Loon and other loons, and had experience with the species in Oregon and Washington. I concur that clarification is needed for bird observations bordering the Ohio/West Virginia boundary. This discussion should involve the Ohio Bird Records Committee. The observer did an excellent job describing the sequence of events taken to document this bird sighting. I support this record for the WV State List.

CM5: I vote to include the Wood County, WV sighting of the Pacific Loon record for the State List. The written description has good detail with research references and includes both photographic evidence. The observer had previous experience and recognized the PALO. He was able to differentiate the bird from similar loons. The observer also documented that the Pacific Loon was on the West Virginia side of the WV-Ohio border. His report was follow up on the initial report by Terry Bronson on eBird and WV Bird which brought many others to observe this

rare visitor bird to WV. Therefore, this report meets the standard set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List as a Review Species since it has less than five confirmed observations.

CM6: Great find and it stuck around long enough for several confirming observers. Nice photos, too!!

CM7: The photo shows a loon and the thin, pointy bill excludes all loons of North America except Red-throated Loon and Pacific Loon. The pale neck with vertical brownish stripes is indicative of a Pacific Loon that has not undergone a complete molt into breeding plumage. Additionally, this bird has a slightly downward looking curve of the bill, which is also indicative of the Pacific Loon. The only remaining question is whether or not the bird was in WV or OH. The provided Topo map clearly shows that the Belleville Lock and Dam are on the WV side of the river and the description of the bird's location and photos provided by Josh Holland support the location of the bird on the WV side of the boundary. Thus, the bird can be counted as a WV bird. However, the question still remains about what is a more regular way to determine the state boundary for species in the Ohio River.