

Harlequin Duck

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: Due to the distance between the observers and the bird (1/3 mile), the written description understandably did not contain a lot of detail about the bird's distinguishing features. However, the white spots and their placement on the head of the male of this species help rule out other species and are visible at a long distance. The accompanying photograph was obviously taken from a long way away but fortunately shows enough to identify this bird as a male Harlequin Duck.

CM2: This was a very nicely documented record as would be expected from a very thorough and experienced birder. The photograph and written description leave no doubt as to the identification. The timing fits with any expected movement into our region and lessens any concerns over provenance. Thus a vote FOR this record is warranted in my estimation. I am glad that so many birders were able to see the bird at once!

CM3: Description and images consistent with this species with multiple corroborators.

CM4: This observation was supported by 11 different WV birders, which is itself a feat. Excellent documentation and comparison of other possible species was included in the record. While the one photo submitted was blurry and not great, it highlighted the key white head markings found on the male Harlequin Duck. I support this record for the WV State List.

CM5: I vote to include the Wood County, WV sighting of the Harlequin Duck record for the State List. The observer had previous experience with the HADU. The written description has good detail with research references, includes both photographic evidence and list of other observers with experience this bird. His GPS coordinates of the observation confirms the birds was within the West Virginia boundary. The observer has previous experience and recognized the HADU. He was able to differentiate the bird from other similar ducks. Therefore, this report meets the standard set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List.

CM6: Seen by plenty of others to confirm this sighting. The photo was good enough for me since I have seen plenty of Harlequin Ducks in the past ... Great Find!

CM7: This particular encounter is more difficult to verify. The reputation of the person who saw the bird helps to believe the identification. The bird was close enough and in view long enough that with a good spotting scope the critical field marks should have been visible. Additionally, the comparison of the bird in the photo with the Long-tailed Duck clearly shows a darker, chunkier bird with the critical white spots in the proper location to be a Harlequin Duck, supporting the field identification.