

## WEST VIRGINIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Number: WVBRC 2023-4 Species: Tufted Duck – Preston Co

**Vote (select only one)** \_X\_ For State List \_Hypothetical List \_Against \_Exotic

**Reasons voting FOR the record:** *(attach more pages if necessary)*

- CM1) The photographs and description clearly show that the bird is a Tufted Duck, which cannot be mistaken for any other species. Although a rare European vagrant, the species has a pattern of regular vagrancy to the northeastern coastal areas of the continent, as well as more inland areas, including each of the states bordering West Virginia.
- CM2) This record is well written and photographic evidence is provided that shows Ring-necked Ducks (the most similar species) in the same photos as the Tufted Duck for direct comparison. The tuft is clearly visible, as well as the white (not light gray as seen in Ring-necked Ducks) flanks, dark back and bill. The tuft is longer than seen with Tufted Duck X Scaup hybrids, which suggests this is an adult breeding male.
- CM3) Description and pictures are accurate for this species.
- CM4) Based on my limited experience with this species and looking at several reference sites that show Tufted duck hybrids with Ring-necked Ducks and the Scaup species, I'm of the opinion that is a pure TUDU and not a hybrid. Even though the photos were taken under less than optimal conditions there is enough to show that head and bill patterns are not that of RNDU. Hybrids would have some characteristic of another species and I just don't see that in this case. I could be wrong. Angle and lighting of course affect what you see in the different shots. I believe the back is black and the flanks are white in spite of the snow.
- CM5) Photos.
- CM6) Detailed descriptions by an experienced observer along with photograph evidence highlighting diagnostic characteristics.
- CM7) I approve this submission for the Tufted Duck based on the thorough descriptions, images, and past experiences presented by the submitter of being familiar with this bird. My lack of experience with this species prompted me to consult my own field guides and reference materials for comparison. This further affirmed my confidence in this observation being reported correctly.