

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Number: (leave blank)
Location: Date: Time:
Bird Seen: To: Age/Sex:

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Small Sterna tern. Black bill that is thin, relatively straight, and not long for a tern. Small head. Long angular wings with a reasonably long, forked tail. Reddish legs are short and petite, even for a tern.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

An approximately 1 year old bird in non-breeding plumage. Forehead white. Cap and rear head black behind the eye, with the black extending well down the nape when the bird was seen perched. Back medium gray. Folded wings also medium gray and relatively consistent toward the primary tips, perhaps a shade darker than the back, and a hint of a dark carpal bar. Outstretched wings as seen in one photo show large, pale, almost translucent windows to the inner webs of the outer primaries with darker ends at the tips only. Rump and tail contrastingly white compared to the back. Underparts mostly white. Underwings also mostly white with grayish outer primary tips showing through.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

No vocalization

Description of behavior:

Flew in from Lake side and landed on shore across from me. Basically, it just sat there doing a little preening and looking around. There were a few Killdeer in the area that kept going around it making a lot of noise and after about 20 minutes or so it flew off back towards the lake as quick as it came.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

Tygart Lake Sub-impoundment above average water level for the area. Muddy/rocky shoreline with a minimal amount of mudflats.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

I was sitting in my automobile when I noticed the bird flying towards me. At first I thought it was a Killdeer as there were several flying back and forth. Once I realized it wasn't a Killdeer, I got out of my auto and was able to take several shots of it with my 600mm camera lens as it flew towards the shore across from where I was standing. I'm a pretty poor judge of distances but I'm going to say maybe 400-450 feet from where I was standing. The lighting was of poor quality from all the smoke and haze in our area on that day which made it difficult to capture the fine details of the bird. Once it was on shore I continued taking photos to the best to my ability considering the distance and poor lighting conditions.

Previous experience with this species:

N/A

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

The primary birds that must be considered here are the other small *Sterna* terns: Forster's, Common, and Roseate. Nonbreeding plumage Forster's terns should show a more substantial, longer bill. Forster's tern mantle and wings are consistently lighter in non-breeding adult plumage. And 1st year Forster's Terns do not show the substantial black on the head extending down the nape. Common Terns also have a more substantial bill and longer/thicker legs than this bird. There tends to be more contrast on the wingtips in a Common Tern as well with darker primary tips. Common Terns do not show as long of a tail. Roseate Terns of similar age should be paler, with a longer/thicker bill. And adult Roseate Terns would show a much longer tail. All of these *Sterna* species can be eliminated with the spread wing photo which shows pale/translucent primary windows that none of these other species show.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:
Consulted with the Groupme WV Rare Bird Alert members for help with ID. Photos taken were also shared with others outside of the group (ABA) who have had more experience with ART E. Also consulted with Ebird and All About Birds discriptions and illustrations.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?
24 hours.

Name:

Address:

Date:

Signature: 

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
170 Stallion Ct.
Hedgesville, WV 25427
Or E-mail to:
wilhershberger@mac.com

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:





















