

## BIRD SIGHTING REPORT

**SPECIES** Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

**DATE** April 11-12, 2014 (This report was written for the April 11 observation.)

**NUMBER** One

**LOCATION** Salisbury, Vermont; in a flooded field on the north side of Creek Road approximately 800 yards east of Otter Creek. (43.920° latitude, -73.166° longitude.)

**CONDITIONS** This bird was observed from about 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at distances ranging from roughly 200 to 400 yards. The sky was mostly sunny with the sun at the observers' backs, the wind was light and varied from southwest to west, and the temperature was about 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Observations were made with a Nikon 20-45x 60mm spotting scope and Celestron 8-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope alternately fitted with a Televue image erector and Celestron Plossl 26mm eyepiece (effective 78x magnification) and a Canon 400D digital camera, T-ring and T-adapter (effective 64x magnification) all mounted on a custom platform, Manfrotto 3066 video head, and Manfrotto 132XB heavy duty tripod. Atmospheric distortion was noticeable but varied, affording periods of relatively crisp viewing. Overall viewing conditions were very good.

**IDENTIFICATION** This goose was slightly smaller than adjacent Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis* – presumed *canadensis* subspecies) and larger than nearby Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Its head was rounder, bill smaller, and neck shorter relative to the Canada Geese. Its bill was pink with black base and small black tip. Eyes were dark, apparently brown. Head was warm, dark brown gradually fading to lighter brown on the neck and upper back to creamy white on the breast and belly. Feathers on the side and nape of neck were arranged in a vertical pleated pattern. Scapulars and lower side were brownish gray with feather edges scalloped light. A thin white strip was visible along the upper edge of the side. Flight feathers were dark charcoal gray – with the secondaries darkest and primaries slightly lighter. Primary coverts were light gray. Lower back was dark grayish brown, upper and under tail coverts white, tail white with light gray base. Legs and webbed feet were pink.

**BEHAVIOR** This bird was swimming around with a flock of 30 to 40 Canada Geese, several Mallards and Northern Pintails (*Anas acuta*). There were several hundred Canada Geese and perhaps a hundred ducks of various species in the general vicinity. It fed briefly by slightly tipping up to retrieve vegetation. It followed its chosen goose flock to the shoreline where it preened briefly, scratched its face (affording excellent views of its foot – see photo), and eventually napped briefly. A Canada Goose lunged at it once, causing it to flap away a short distance, but otherwise they all acted as one peaceful flock. An immature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flew by high overhead causing this bird and its Canada Goose flock to fly a short distance before settling again.

**DISTINCTIONS** Brown head and neck and brownish gray upperparts distinguish as one of several species of Eurasian “gray” geese. Relatively smaller size, smallish pink bill with black tip and base, smaller head, short neck, pink legs and feet, and lack of belly barring and eye ring distinguish as this species.

**OBSERVERS** Theodore G. Murin, 77 Overlook Drive, South Burlington, VT 05403  
Scott Morrival, South Burlington, VT  
Subsequently seen by many others

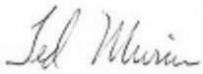
ROUGH PHOTOS



ROUGH PHOTOS (continued)



**DATE OF REPORT** April 11, 2014; updated April 29, 2014 to add addendum regarding provenance and precedence

**SIGNATURE** 

**ADDENDUM** The bird was observed again late the following afternoon (April 12, 2014) in excellent conditions. At fairly close range (about 70 yards) and using the scopes listed above, during extended periods of tipping up to feed, both legs were seen to be unbanded.

Regarding precedence, Pink-footed Geese of presumed wild origin have been regionally accepted by Bird Record Committees in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine. The only published state list for which the species is missing is New Hampshire, and the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee's published list was last updated in 2009.