

#2012.039

1) Reason for documenting this sighting - unusual species, unusual number, unusual date, unusual plumage, unusual breeding record, Christmas Bird Count record, Spring Bird Count record (include all that apply): Unusual species

2) Species: Red-naped Sapsucker

3) Number of birds: 1

4) Age/Sex/Plumage: Adult female

5) Date(s): 4/5/12 - 4/6/12

6) Location (include county): Wadsworth Wetlands Forest Preserve, Lake County. (Now Sedge Meadow FP) The bird was in the woods to the east of the river, at 42.423236°N, 87.930687° W

7) Observers: Paul Sweet on 4/5, Paul Sweet, Rob Erickson, and Al Stokie on 4/6.

8) Your name: Paul Sweet

9) Your mailing address: [REDACTED]

10) Your e-mail address: [REDACTED]

11) Others agreeing with the identification: Everyone agreed that this bird wasn't a Yellow-bellied, opinions varied as far as whether hybrids could be ruled out.

12) Observers NOT agreeing with the identification: See above.

13) Description of bird (size, shape, proportions, details of both color and pattern on head, back, chin, throat, breast, flanks, wings, undertail, and tail, etc.; coloration of soft parts: bill, legs, and feet). Include only details actually seen in the field:

The bird was a fairly small, mostly black and white woodpecker, resembling a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in plumage and shape. The nape had a bold, square red patch, the throat was red with a very small white patch visible under the chin (most clearly seen in photos, attached), and the black malar stripe was strongly invaded by red at the rear of the throat. The back was distinctly marked with two vertical rows of white bars on black, with a single row of small white spots down the middle. At times on 4/6, this pattern on the back appears to be obscured, but it is quite distinct in several photos.

14) Description of behavior: The bird was foraging actively, moving from tree to tree rather quickly.

15) Description of vocalizations: None

16) Description of immediate and surrounding habitat(s): This is riparian forest, with suburban housing to the east and open wetlands to the west.

17) Optical equipment used for observation (type, power): Leica 10X42 binoculars

18) Distance/how measured? 45 feet, estimated

19) Time(s) of observation: 9:00 am on 4/5, 8:30 am on 4/6

20) Total time of observation: ~30 min each day

21) Weather conditions: Temps around 40, with fairly strong NE winds and clear skies on 4/5, slightly warmer and less windy on 4/6.

22) Previous experience with this species and similar species: I have seen hundreds of Yellow-bellied here in Illinois and elsewhere, and I have observed nests and helped band Red-naped in Arizona.

23) Please eliminate other similar species and/or hybrids: The red forecrown and red throat and overall black and white plumage with white longitudinal stripe on the wings rule out any woodpecker except Yellow-bellied and Red-naped Sapsucker. The white spot visible on the chin, the red invading the malar, the bold red nape patch and the separate rows of bars on the back rule out Yellow-bellied. Greg Neise, looking at a few photos I posted, claimed that a) the white on the chin was simply backlighting, and b) that the bird fell within the bounds of hybrid Yellow-bellied x Red-naped. However, I do have additional photos that show a hint of white on the chin, which is consistent with some Red-naped females, but not a male hybrid, and that are clearly not explicable as reflection. Given that all 4 main points appear to fall within the range of a female Red-naped, and that the white on the chin indicates female, I don't see any reason to call it a hybrid.

24) Were photos obtained? Yes

25) If so, by whom? Me.

26) Books and illustrations consulted and advice received. How did these influence this description?

27) How long after the observation were field notes recorded? I never really recorded field notes, beyond a note on IBF, but still have the photos

28) How long after the observation was this form completed? 21 months.

29) Additional remarks: The discussion on IBF, while enlightening, does suffer from the fact that I only posted a few photos.











