

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names:

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala*

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):

1 adult

3. Parish: **Plaquemines** (according to eBird mapping) at about 26.1877 N x -88.1516 W
Specific Locality:

Far off shore, probably very close to open seas.

4. Date(s) when observed: 5/7/2016

5. Time(s) of day when observed:

1:30 PM exactly; this was “ship time”, but also the time displayed on my phone. I assume that ship time, Verizon time, and CST were one and the same at this point, but can't be 100% positive on this point as it isn't always the case on sea journeys...

6. Reporting observer and address:

Bill Etter
407 S Cigar Rd
Northampton, PA 18067
billetter01@gmail.com
215.964.3613

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): NA

8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): NA

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

Clear and bright, with sun overhead. No obfuscating light conditions.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Theron binoculars 8x42

11. Distance to bird(s): Bird flew in from unknown distance at about eye level, then banked upwards and passed overhead within 200 feet

12. Duration of observation: about one minute as it approached and passed overhead.

13. Habitat: seen from open promenade on a cruise ship, approaching from the west over open water

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

Seen from open promenade on a cruise ship, approaching from the west over open water. A strong flier, headed from west to east; banked high to clear height of the ship.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

At first sighting, I hoped this bird would be a seabird (jaeger perhaps), but soon realized it was in the pigeon/dove category due to consistent, direct flight style, rounded wings, and an increasing sense of perspective on my part, allowing me to assess the bird's general structure. As it flew closer, it was clearly a bird much more bulky than any dove; a strong flier with a dark body and a very bold white crown. It was at about eye level on approach, and I believe it had to bank upwards to clear the height of the ship. I didn't note any white in the wings or on the tail, only in the crown. In addition to the bold white crown, the dark body of the bird and lack of white on the wings and tail were distinct enough to suggest White-crowned Pigeon. Not possible to note were details of the iris, nape, or bill color (general shape of the bill was apparent), but I feel that these details aren't essential to arrive at the ID. I don't believe that the bright white crown could have been any sort of trick of the light, as the sun was well overhead and conditions were crystal clear...no "flying into the sunset" type light distortions to suggest a bright crown or anything like that.

16. Voice: NA

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Size, shape (particularly the broad, rather bluntly rounded pigeon-like wings), flight style, and plumage characteristics eliminate any sea bird I can think of. A brightly crowned noddy would have a completely different flight style and a long and notably thin tern-like bill. I'm only eliminating noddy based on very superficial similarities in the crown, not because it seemed like even a remotely possible identification.

White-winged Dove would be smaller, though I admit there was no way to compare the size of the bird to anything at all as it approached alone over open water. White-winged Dove would have displayed at least a small degree of contrast from wingtip to the back/breast, which wasn't apparent in this bird. White-winged Dove would also have shown its namesake "white" in the wings, which would have been obvious under these conditions, if present, as the bird approached fairly closely and passed overhead while flapping its wings constantly. Eurasian Collared-Dove and Mourning Dove would not be uniformly dark with a white crown, and the rounded tail further eliminates Mourning Dove.

Rock Pigeon has widely varied plumage and is the same general size and shape as a White-crowned Pigeon, but the odds of one over open water at this particular place, also looking *exactly* like a classic adult White-crowned Pigeon seem remote.

I know of no other species that this could have been, but am always open to suggestion.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): NA

19. Previous experience with this species:

I've seen these birds several times over the past decade: on the Florida Keys, on several Caribbean Islands, and at a few places in Yucatan and Central America, including a few birds in Honduras just a few days prior to this observation.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

NA – this species is familiar to me and fairly unmistakable, but a few internet references were used to help eliminate remote possibilities as I write this report.

a. at time of observation: NA

b. after observation: NA

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation. Are notes attached?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation. At what date?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory	
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images	

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes

23. Date: 5/23/2016

Time: 21:00 EST

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? ____yes_____

If yes, may we include your name with the report? ____yes_____