

The Wilson Ornithological Club

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The Wilson Bulletin

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Ogden, Iowa
Jan 31 1933

Phil DuMont
Iowa City, Ia.
Dear Phil:-

You either got up on the wrong side of the bed or else your lady friend went back on you the day you wrote me but I will forgive you anyway. You should be in the banking business and have several hundred suspicious depositors working on you day and night than you would get "tamed down". If I did not force myself to think about birds once in a while I would have been crazy long ago. The older you get the more you are getting likd Doc Stephens and us fellows who are novices at the game hardly dare to say we saw a Meadowlark unless we are questioned very severely. Wish I might have had a gun and shot that Curlew and proved our point but I never carry a gun and neither do I have a collectors permit any more. I lived with the long billed curlews and camped right with them in the Nebraska sandhills. I also handled their young and photographed them (or tried to) and heard their calls, watched their actions and feel that I really should know one when I see it. This bird was seen in the same field where you first discovered the Golden Plovers. That was when we had our all day hike also and it was also on May 15th. Quite a coincidence. This year we listed 103. We werestanding near those ponds in that pasture and had been watching a Hudsonian Godwit (I can hear you doubt this too but it was so) that was at the edge of the water with a lot of other shore birds. Suddenly I heard that "call of the wild" that can come from nothing else but the Long Billed Curlew. It gave me such a thrill that I scanned the heavens to see from where it came and there far ⁱⁿ and high the distance approaching from the south he came. I stood almost transfixed and called to Bob - "It's a Long Billed Curlew" Onehe came and if I ever prayed that a bird should come down I did that time. I fairly whispered out loud "Come on down" and he must have heard it for suddenly he gave another loud call and wheeling in a great circle he gracefully alighted in the pasture directly before us. That was one of the greatest thrills of my life and we watched him through our glasses less than 100 yards away for at least five minutes. Bob had his book on water birds in his pocket and we looked carefully for the head markings, the long curved bill, the large size and everything was there to prove that it was a Long Bill. He soon flew across the pond and when we tried to follow him he flew away. Regarding my Harlan Hawk can say that this was classified by Steppan who mounted it and it is now standing directly in front of me. The tail is really more barred than mottled but there is no signs of any red on the tail whatever. I studied Roberts last night and still I am rather doubtful. It is about the blackest hawk I have ever seen. If I go to Fairfield I will try to see you if possible. Business conditions are such that I cannot promise anything any more.

Walter