

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: WHIMBREL

Number: 1.

Location: Babcock Access, Hawkeye Wildlife Area (Coralville Reservoir)

Habitat: Large body of open water, gravel road with gravel access peninsula extending out into water, short grass vegetation on main shore.

Date and time: 6 June 2000, approx. 8:00 to 8:45 p.m.

Name and address: Mike Dooley, 1811 B Ave., Apt. 2, Cedar Rapids IA 52402-5464.

Others with you: None.

Others before or after you: Chris Edwards (North Liberty), experienced birder, 7 June.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior:

Large godwit-like shorebird perhaps 10-15% smaller than nearby Herring Gull; exceptionally long, black, strongly decurved bill; sharply defined buff-cream eyebrow, thick brown eyestripe, hazier buff crown stripe on brown head; uppers overall light brown; heavily spotted on flanks, close to barring; buff-cream belly, unmarked; finely spotted neck; chocolate primaries contrasted with lighter brown uppers on several flights and landings; legs appeared dark grey, occasionally thought I could discern bluish tint, but possibly because I was looking for it.

Lifted and flew short distances all about access and area numerous times, each time sounding 4-5 short, sharp, loud whistled notes. Disappeared off over water twice, only to come back after several minutes. Always fed on dry dirt-and-gravel surface, never waded.

Similar species eliminated: Godwits due to bill shape.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? Chris Edwards put bird on RBA based on my details via e-mail.

Viewing conditions: Unhindered late evening sun, about one half hour viewing time while sun still above horizon. Always close range, sometimes exceptionally so, with scope.

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: Two sightings of Hudsonian Godwits in spring.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Peterson field guide, on site. Others later at home.

How long before field notes made: No field notes.

How long before this form completed: 48 hours.