

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Ruff How many? 1Location? Pinchey Bottoms - Red Rock Reservoir - (Marion Co.)Type of habitat? Ponds from flooded Des Moines River areasWhen? date(s): July 28, 2002 time: 4:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m., very approximatelyWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Mike Dooley and Chris Casterothers before or after you: Jim Sinclair found it

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We found this large shorebird in water up to its belly all the time. Its plumage looked unkempt, disheveled, and unorganized. It was probably a brownish-gray color with lots of blackish mottling all over its shoulders, back, front, and sides. It was a big, bulky shorebird. It was 1 1/2 to 2 times the size and bulk of Pectoral Sandpipers beside it. I did not see leg color - it was always in the water. It was much bulkier than Lesser Yellowlegs nearby with their slim bodies. This bird stood out as big and bulky. The bill was good size in thickness but not too long. The bill was like a Pectoral Sandpiper's in relation to its body. The bird was structurally similar to a Pectoral Sandpiper but much larger in size.

(I left Chris and Mike as they were going closer to the bird).

Similar species and how eliminated: Nothing quite like this bird.

(See on Back side)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain: :

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

sunny, sun at our side, good viewing. Distances roughly estimated at 100-120 yards. 22X Scope, and I looked through Chris and Mike's higher powered scopes.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen one immature in Iowa in September.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None

How long before field notes made? Made at this form completed? July 29, 2002

11:45 p.m.
that night

Similar species and how eliminated

Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits have long, upturned bills which this bird did not have.

Whimbrel and Long-Billed Curlew have long, downturned bills which this bird did not have.

Dowitchers and Snipe have very long, straight bills which this bird did not have.

Stilt Sandpipers were present in the area and have longer bills that drooped at the tip which this bird did not resemble.

An Avocet has much different plumages and a thin, upturned bill.

Golden and Black-Bellied Plover have such a distinct "plover look" to them which this bird certainly wasn't a Plover. Plovers also have different plumages.

An Upland Sandpiper has uniform plumage and should be slimmer than this bird. I've never seen an Upland standing in water to its belly.

A Greater Yellowlegs has a longer bill than this Ruff and is pretty uniform in grayish plumage. One was seen earlier in the area. A Greater Yellowlegs always looks like a Yellowlegs.

A Willet has a pretty long, straight dark bill (longer than a Ruff's bill). It has pretty uniform gray plumages.

[National Geographic guide used for similar species]