

Marbled Godwit - 1

April 24, 1984

NE Mills County, Iowa (Former Tom Axtell Farm, recently purchased ~~for~~ a Stortenbecker)

Description of flying shorebird: "Flying. Large. Long beak. Unmottled wing. Bill prob. straight. Buff below + most of elsewhere too. Outer primaries darker. I don't see white on rump or anywhere else. Bill long for sure."

Behavior + description of the sighting: the Stortenbeckers have pushed up a new terrace below the top of the hill. I was walking by on the road below when about 30 starlings flushed, along with what I thought were 3 Rock Doves, 1 of them brown. The two real ones went north, + the brown one circled back + was clearly a shorebird. Wing pattern immediately reminded me of the long-billed Curlew one we have at UNO - some warm brown, some black outer primaries. Bird circled a few times, moving west, + finally flew south behind mass timber. Soil was gone behind + near terrace.

Similar species: Other large shorebirds

Hudsonian Godwit: White wing stripe + w rump

Dowitcher: white rump + back

Long-billed Curlew: similar I think the bill was straight, but am eliminating this mainly by probability.

Viewing condition: About 7:30 am. Saw it a minute

or so. 8x binoculars. I can show you the distance, but can't measure it off a map, as the ~~land~~ terrace is newer than the maps we have. The whole property isn't wider than a $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ section, + the bird wasn't at the far side of it at first. The bird was nearly due west of me. My weather notes for this census say "sunny, few fluffy clouds $\frac{2}{3}$, light breeze from NW".

Written 5/25/84 from notes taken right after the sighting (quoted) and from memory.

- Barb Wilson
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I consulted the National Geographic Field Guide's picture of flying shorebirds when I got home, about 9:00.