

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Semipalmated Sandpiper How many? 2 fresh juvenilesLocation? Coralville Res, Johnson Co, IAType of habitat? nearly dry backwater with mud flatWhen? date(s): 3 Aug 1985 time: 2:25 to 3:00 pmWho? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52240others with you: none

others before or after you: _____

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.

I was studying 2 Western Sandpipers amongst about 50 Semipalmated Sandpipers in advanced prebasic molt when I noted a small reddish-brown peep smaller than a Western by about 1 inch and slightly smaller than the 50 or so Semipalmated Sandpipers. It had a black bill and black legs. Bill appeared similar to semipalmateds. The top of the head was streaked reddish-brown. There was a prominent white supercilious line that included the top of the eye and extended behind the eye and dropped lower. The lores were darker. The chin and throat were light gray and there was a prominent buffy breast band with light vertical streaks. The belly and underwing were white. The sides of the neck had a few heavier streaks. The back, scapulars, and wing feathers had dark centers edged with reddish-buff, except for some scapulars which had white tips. There was a fine row of white dots on the back forming a V and the white tips on the scapulars formed an indistinct second V. The toes appeared unwebbed to me, but they could have been semipalmated. Another similar bird was also studied. The other Semipalmateds were gray-black and in advanced prebasic molt.

Similar species and how eliminated: Black legs exclude least. Uniformity of coloration, dark head, and small bill exclude western. The lack of contrast between mantle and upper scapulars with the wing favors Semipalmated over Rufous-necked Stint. The contrasty facial pattern also favors Semipalmated.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Overcast. About 30 feet with Quantum telescope. Bird filled 1/3 of scope field.Previous experience with species and similar ones: I can't recall seeing a juvenile semipalmated with rufous plumage.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? While viewing this form completed? 3 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240