

IOWA

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Semipalmated Sandpiper 2. Number: 1
3. Location State Fish Hatchery, Fairport, Iowa, Muscatine County
4. Date: 21 October 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 12:40PM to 12:52 PM

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): The size and shape of a peep, this bird was slightly larger than the four Least Sandpipers with which it was found; and notably smaller than the four Sanderlings which were present. Leg and bill color was black, and streakings on the breast were faint and confined mostly to the sides (no breast band). Back coloration was a pale gray-brown. Chestnut coloring on scapulars was lacking. The bill was short and straight, and the length closely approximated the length of the mandibles of the Least Sandpipers. When flushed, the rump exhibited a dark median stripe.

7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A
8. Description of behavior: Found feeding with Least Sandpipers in a random manner, often picking at food items rather than probing for them like the Dunlins which were also present.

9. Habitat - general: Drained fish hatchery pond along the Mississippi River.
specific: Exposed mudflats and shallow water with algae present in a drained fish hatchery pond.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
White-rumped Sandpiper has a white rump; Least Sandpiper usually has a distinct breast band, yellowish legs and browner body plumage; Western Sandpiper's bill length averages longer, with a droop at the end, and this species also tends to have rufous traces in the scapulars in late fall.

11. Distance (how measured)? 25 yards, estimated by eyesight. 12. Optical equipment: Pentax 10x50 Binoculars & Bushnell Spacemaster w/ 20x eyepiece

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Overcast with intermittent drizzle; no shadows; conditions fair to good.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
Many of all species listed above in both breeding and wintering plumages.

15. Other observers: None

16. Did the others agree with your identification? N/A

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: None

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Birds of North America by C.S. Robbins and a Guide to the identification and ageing of Holarctic Waders by Prater, et. al. supported this identification.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?
Field notes immediately; this description 52 hours.

Signature John C. Robinson Address: P.O. Box 1015
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Date: 23 October 1983 City, State: _____