

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Whimbrel 2. Number 1  
3. Location Willow Slough, N.E. Mills County, Iowa  
4. Date: 19 May 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 6:00 pm to ± 5 min

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):

Large gray-tan shorebird with decurved bill.  
Legs appear greenish in 20x lens, gray in 40x.  
Pattern on back dull, water-color like. Head  
pattern: narrow dark line through eye. White  
above that. Entire crown broadly  
dark, with a very narrow white line  
in center. Primaries all dark.  
Tail dully barred brown + a pale color.  
Underwings checked brown + a darker color.

7. Description of voice, if heard:

8. Description of behavior: Picking stuff from mud. Tame. With Wilson's Phalarope

9. Habitat - general: Edge of water. mudflat in  
drying slough

specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

Size + beak indicate a curlew. Long-billed eliminated by shorter  
bill + head pattern. Eskimo Curlew eliminated by wing linings.

11. Distance (how measured)?

70 ft. ~~to~~ (to ~~the~~) guesstimate.

12. Optical equipment:

20x 40x scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

Sunny. South + slightly east of ~~the~~ measurement on north dike.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

They were common (in season) on the beaches of Oregon + I  
often saw them there.

15. Other observers:

None, as usual.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: ~~None~~. I'm not sure  
anyone else saw it, though I called a rare bird alert in Omaha.

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

I checked Peterson's new field guide. Despite the pronounce curve in the  
beak I was wishing Eskimo curlew. That will be some day!

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? about 1 hour

Signature: Barbara L Wilson Address: Rt 1 Box 41

Date: 24 May 1981 City, State: Hastings Iowa