

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Marbled Godwit How many? 1Location? Cooling ponds south of Council Bluffs, Ia.Type of habitat? sandy mud flatWhen? date(s): April 24, 1982 time: 3:45 PM to 4:00 PMWho? your name and address: Robert K. Myersothers with you: Francis Moore and Ross Silcock

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.

The bird was obviously a godwit. It was a very large shorebird - bigger than a greater yellowlegs. It dwarfed two sandpeeps that were near it. The outstanding characteristic was the very long slightly upturned bill. The bill was yellowish from the base out to about 1/2 its length and then dark the rest of the way. Bill length was at least 3x length of head.

The overall coloration was buffy brown. Faint horizontal streakings (marbling) could be seen on the breast. A light line was noted just above the eye.

The eye was dark.

The legs were fairly long and were dark.

The bird was resting on a sand bar so ~~was~~ could not see the rump. When Ross approached too close it move off and raised its wings to fly. The rump was buffy brown and the wing linings were reddish (cinnamon).

Similar species and how eliminated: Hudsonian Godwit would have had a white rump. Hudsonians would also be grayer if in winter plumage and rustier red if in spring.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

We viewed in bright sun from about 125 yd. with 25x scope and Ross approached to within 30' before bird moved off.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen 2 other Marbled Godwits and quite a few Hudsonian's in winter + spring plumage.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Peterson's - Field Guide To Birds

How long before field notes made? 3 hrs this form completed? 3 days

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