

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Dunlin

Number: 6

Date: 2 Dec 1990

Time: 9:05-9:20 a.m.

Location: Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-Oak Grove Beach

Observer(s): Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA

Other observer(s): none

Description of bird(s): I had finished looking over some gulls that were resting on the beach when I decided to walk out to the south point of the beach to check for Snow Buntings. As I rounded the point, seven shorebirds suddenly took off a few feet in front of me. Six of the birds were medium-sized shorebirds, about the size of Killdeer. These six showed a white rump and a narrow white stripe along the base of the flight feathers in flight. The birds quickly circled to the east and landed on the beach about 100 feet from me. I was able to study them with a spotting scope for several more minutes. The six larger birds showed uniform dull gray upperparts and wings. The underparts were whitish with blurry gray streaks on the flanks and breast. The head was also gray. The bill was about twice the length of the head, was tapered throughout its length, drooped noticeably near the tip, and was black. The legs were also dark and seemed proportionately short as compared to a Killdeer. I did not hear the birds call. The six Dunlin were accompanied by a Least Sandpiper (See separate documentation). This represents the fourth December record of Dunlin from the Saylorville area in the last 5 years.

Similar species and how eliminated: The gray and white color, bill size and shape, leg color, and wing and tail pattern eliminates all other shorebirds, especially Red Knot(basic plumage), Purple Sandpiper, and Sanderling.

Optical equipment and viewing conditions: Viewing conditions were excellent with overcast skies. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

Previous experience with species: Very familiar with this species from Iowa and elsewhere

How long before field notes written? none written