

Documentation Form

Species- Hudsonian Godwit

Number- 26 basic adults

Location- Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co., IA

Habitat- islands at upper end of reservoir

Date- 9 August 1997

Time- 3:20-4:06 p.m.

Observer- Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 ½ W. Magnolia Fort Collins, CO
80521

Other observers- none

Description- I arrived at the upper end of the reservoir and soon noticed a flock of shorebirds circling the islands. I recognized them as Hudsonian Godwits because of the size, bill shape, and wing and tail patterns. All of the birds were similar in appearance. They were slightly smaller than a Ring-billed Gull, but much larger than nearby Killdeer and Pectoral Sandpipers. The bill was long, slightly upturned, and bicolored (dull pink base, distal two thirds dark). The head and neck were gray except for a lighter supercilium. The entire body was a very even-colored brownish-gray except that the lower belly was paler. The legs were long and appeared dark-colored. In flight, the wing and tail patterns were striking. The upperwings were brownish-gray except for a white stripe extending along the bases of the flight feathers. The underwing linings were black and contrasted with the lighter belly. The white wing stripe was visible from underneath. The uppertail coverts were white and the distal half of the tail was solid black. I took a few distant photos of the birds. Based on these features, I concluded the birds were adults in basic plumage. The date would also indicate the birds were most likely adults.

Similar species and how eliminated- The large size and bill shape identified the birds as godwits. The black wing linings, white wing stripe, and white rump eliminate other godwit species (Marbled, Bar-tailed, and Black-tailed).

Previous experience with this and similar species- I have seen numerous Hudsonian Godwits in Iowa and many other Midwestern states, plus a few along the Atlantic Coast in fall. I am also very familiar with Marbled Godwits and I have some experience with Bar-tailed Godwits in North Carolina.

Viewing conditions and equipment- Viewing conditions were excellent with clear skies and the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 300+ meters. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

References used- none

How long before field notes were written? none written

How long before this form was completed? written 18 August 1997