

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Long-billed Dowitcher

How Many? 1 juv.

Location? Big Creek State Park-north end

Habitat? muddy area along lake

Date? 19 Nov 1987

Time? approx. 4:05-4:40 p.m.

Observers Name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird: The bird was feeding with several Common Snipe and Killdeer on large, muddy area. The bird was larger and heavier than the snipe, but about the same shape. The bill was very long, straight, and dark. The legs were also dark and relatively short. The back was light gray with some paler edgings to the scapulars. The wings were also light gray with lighter feather edgings. The underparts were lighter than the back and were dingy gray/brown in color. The undertail coverts were white with several distinct, black bars extending onto the flanks. The head was gray with a distinct light line over the eye. I was pretty sure the bird had to be a Long-bill by the date, but I flushed it just to make sure. Upon flushing, the bird uttered several sharp, rather loud "pip" notes. I also saw the white rump when the bird flew. The bird did not return to the area after I flushed it.

Similar species and how eliminated: Short-billed Dowitcher eliminated by the birds call note (should be softer notes for Short-bill) and by the combination of gray/brown underparts, gray back with light feather edgings, and barred undertail coverts.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were good with the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 feet before I flushed the bird. I used Nikon 8x23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen numerous Long- and Short-billed dowitchers in Iowa and have experience identifying the birds by call note.

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

How long before field notes were made? none made

How long before this form was completed? 2 hours after sighting