

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Western Sandpiper, juvenile; *Number:* 2 (one seen well)

Location: Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., Iowa

Date: 22 August 1992; *Time:* 9:30-9:35 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: none

Habitat and circumstances: mud flat along waterway at upper part of reservoir.

Description of bird: Two peeps landed on the mud and I scoped one from the car window. They were peep sized, much smaller than a nearby Pectoral Sandpiper. The legs were black (not covered with mud). The bill was dark with a thick base and thin tip. The bill was definitely decurved toward the tip. The bill was slightly shorter than the distance from the base of the bill to the back of the head. The eye was dark with a broad light superciliary line. The top of the head was gray-brown with fine streaking. The underparts were light with some darkness around the bib that I did not see well because the bird did not face me directly. The tertials had fresh rufous brown edging. The scapulars were also edged in rufous-brown. There was a single thin white scapular V. Some of the coverts appeared to have small white tips.

Voice: not heard.

Similar species: The overall color made me think of Least Sandpiper first, but the legs were definitely black and the bill was more decurved than any Least Sandpiper I have seen. I have seen rather rufous appearing Semipalmated Sandpipers, but they looked much more uniform on the upper parts than this bird did. Also the bill was too curved for a semi.

Any one have reservations?: NA

Light: Sun behind me; *Distance:* 20 yards (paced); *Optics:* 10x binocular and 20x scope (filled frame).

Previous experience: This is the time of year I have seen most in Iowa.

References before/after viewing: none.

Time of notes: after birds flew. *Final typing:* 2 hours.