

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Western Sandpiper How many? 2 alternate plumage
 Location? Coralville Res. (An Post Bridge A.), Johnson Co., IA
 Type of habitat? Dry backwater with mud flats
 When? date(s): 3 Aug 1985 time: 2:05 to 3:00 PM
 Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52240
 others with you: none
 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.

I spotted the first bird because it was in the water feeding down. Bill was black and thicker and longer than Semipalmated sandpiper in same field of view. Bill dropped at tip. Heavy triangular marks on sides and similar, but not as heavy, marks across breast, forming a bib (not sharply demarcated like a Pintail S.). One bird had scattered rufous feathers on scapulars, the other bird was similar but had rufous on shoulder and some in supercillium. The back and scapulars were partially molted with some black feathers and others gray -- a very mottled effect. The birds appeared almost as wide longer than Semipalmated sandpiper in same field of view. Underparts otherwise bright white.

Similar species and how eliminated: The heavy markings on the underparts would be unusual for any other species. We usually see Westerns in basic or juvenile plumage.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
 Overcast, about 30' ($\frac{1}{3}$ of field in Quatan scope).

Previous experience with species and similar ones: yes

References and persons consulted before writing ^{final} description: Am Birds 38: 853, 1984

How long before field notes made? one spot this form completed? 3 hrs.

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