

DOCUMENTATION FORM

SPECIES: Baird's Sandpiper

NUMBER: 2

DATE: 11 Mar 1991

TIME: approx. 8:15-9:10 a.m.

LOCATION: Riverton W.A., Fremont Co., IA

OBSERVER: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

OTHER OBSERVERS: none

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD(S): Two small sandpipers, much smaller than the Killdeer which accompanied them. Both birds had the long, stretched out appearance of other Baird's I have seen, which is quite unlike other peeps except for White-rumped Sandpiper. The bill was black, slender, and straight. The head and breast were brown, with the brown color on the breast being sharply demarcated from otherwise white underparts (much like a Pectoral Sandpiper). The mantle and wings were slightly darker brown and had a scaly appearance due to frosty white feather edgings. The legs were black. I flushed the birds several times to make them call. Both gave a low, rolling "churk", similar to the call of a Pectoral Sandpiper but higher-pitched. Based on my personal observations, I expect to see Baird's Sandpipers as early as any other shorebird except Killdeer, snipe, and woodcock.

I later saw 4 more Baird's Sandpipers on this date near McPaul, Fremont Co. They were similar to the above birds in plumage, though I did not hear them call.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: The dark legs and smaller size eliminates Pectoral Sandpiper. Dark legs also eliminates Least Sandpiper. Other peeps were eliminated by the combination of bill shape, long, slender body shape, scaly upperparts, and call note.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT AND VIEWING CONDITIONS: Viewing conditions were excellent with good light and a clear sky. Estimated viewing distance was 40-50 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: I am very familiar with all five species of peeps which occur in Iowa (though none of the others is as likely on this date as Baird's)

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES WRITTEN: 1 hour after initial observation

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: 2 days