

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Western Sandpiper How many? one

Location? pothole one mile east of Colo, Iowa (on old highway 30)

Type of habitat? pothole in plowed field

When? date(s): 14 May 1986 time: 2:10 to 2:30

Who? your name and address: Paul Martsching 1120 Marston Ames, Iowa 50010

others with you: _____

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.

This bird was with a Least Sandpiper -(small, quite brown, with yellowish legs, & beak thin and small). A peep a fair amount bigger than the Least. Beak extremely long with definitely drooped end and spooned tip. Legs blackish and partial webbing between toes (seen as near as 20 x 80 binoculars can focus). (seen from various angles) Was slightly bigger headed and slightly lighter faced than Least. Crown, auriculars and scapulars orangish - the scapulars more strongly orange than crown or auriculars. Spotting on breast more "discrete spots" - not nearly as run together as Least or as "brown" a background. Spotting ended more unevenly on breast than Least. Spent much more time in water than Least. Spots somewhat pointed or V shaped.

White rumped has spots going along below wings almost to rear end. Least doesn't have partial webbing between toes and legs are more or less yellowish - beak shorter & finer. This particular Least did have some rustish scattered around on back.

Baird's doesn't have orange or rust on crown, auriculars and scapulars & its wings extend beyond the tip of the tail. Semipalmated doesn't have such a long beak or rust on crown, auriculars, and scapulars. Bird did not have prominent white wing stripe of Sandpiper.

Similar species and how eliminated: Sandpiper article in American Birds shows both Semipalm and Western with spooned bills and partial webbing between toes, but Semipalms bill is shorter and doesn't droop at end (except in extreme cases with ^{some} Semipalm females) and in any case doesn't have the orangish feathers. Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Sun to my SW; I was variously NE, N, & NW of the bird 20-50 ft. 7 x 35 and 20 x 80 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: saw one a few years ago in

spring in S. Dakota. Also one in fall 1981. References and persons consulted before writing description: after description was written, American Birds Sep-Oct 1984 - Field Identification of Smaller Sandpipers was consulted.

How long before field notes made? on the spot this form completed? 5 hours

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