

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: White-rumped Sandpiper; **Number:** 2 juveniles

Location: Half Moon Lake, Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., IA

Date: 6 Oct 1997; **Time:** 9:00 to 9:20 a.m.

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

Others before/with/after: James Huntington saw 1 on 2 Oct and 3 on 5 Oct. James saw them again on the 8th.

Habitat and circumstances: old backwater with mud flats

Description of bird: I walked around the entire west (inner) side of the backwater and did not find the birds until I was back to the north end. I saw several shorebirds fly in, one with a white rump. I moved up with my telescope and studied at close range the two birds that appeared to be White-rumped Sandpipers. Their size was intermediate between the Least and Pectoral sandpipers that were feeding on the mud flat with them. They seemed to be at least 50% larger than Least and had an overall gray appearance. The legs were black. They had elongated bodies with primaries extending beyond the tail. The dark bills were longer than those of Least. The underparts were white except for a plain gray throat and upper breast which did not extend as far down as on the Pectorals. There were a few distinct gray streaks on the sides near the bend of the wing. There was a slight white eye line, especially behind the eye. Feathers of the upper parts were edged lighter (juvenile). On one occasion I saw both birds flying with a Least Sandpiper and they had white across the rump compared to black down the center of the tail for the Least. I tried to flush the birds by getting as close as possible on the mud and throwing sticks, but they did not fly. Finally, all of the shorebirds suddenly flew, and I saw the white rump on one.

Voice: not heard

Similar species: Baird's Sandpiper is most similar in size and shape. It has a streaked bib, overall brown color, and lacks white rump.

Any one have reservations?: no

Light: sunny, side lighting; **Distance:** 25 yards (estimate); **Optics:** 10x binocular, 20x scope

Previous experience: This is a common spring bird in Iowa. I have only seen one previously in fall. I have seen juveniles on the East Coast. There are about 15 fall records from Iowa, not all of which are well substantiated.

References before/after viewing: none

Time of notes: 1.5 hours; **Final typing:** 4 days (minimal change)