

Ruff

Record Number: 82-30

8 Sep 1982

Classification: A-P

east of Tabor, Fremont Co., IA

*Silcock*Bray*#Kent*Wilson*Schaufenbuel

to 09/12, #Rose; IBL 52:121; 53:35, 87-90, Silcock 1983

DOCUMENTATIONS

W. Ross Silcock, 8 Sep

Tanya Bray, 10 Sep

Barbara L. Wilson, 10 Sep

Thomas H. Kent, 10 Sep

Joe Schaufenbuel, 12 Sep

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, 10 Sep, P-0057

B. J. Rose, P-0089

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 52:121

Records Committee: IBL 53:35

Silcock, W. R. 1983. A Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) in Southwest Iowa. IBL 53:87-90

Photo: Am. Birds 37:187, 1983, P-0089

VOTE: 2-I-P, 4-II, 1-abstain

II, I-P if photo OK.

II, Good description.

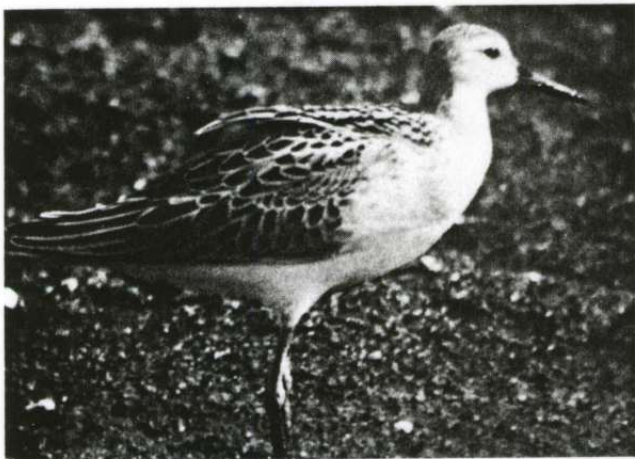
II, Saw bird.

abstain or I-P, I have not seen photos, but will vote as such being the case. Question: Should I (a principle observer offering a written doc.) vote on the same record if photos by others of same bird(s) is offered?

REVOTE (by mail): 6-I-P, 1-abstain

Sept. 6 with an exceptionally late bird in LaSalle, Ill., Nov. 13 (LA). Several flocks of 100-150 Am. Golden Plovers were reported while Black-bellied Plovers were widespread in groups of 20 or fewer. A maximum of nine Ruddy Turnstones was noted along L. Erie into early November while scattered singles were found elsewhere. The largest concentration of Com. Snipe was 48. Whimbrels were restricted to the Great Lakes with 7 L. Erie and 4 L. Michigan reports Aug. 7-Sept. 26. Numbers peaked during mid-September with 22 at Chicago (JL) and five at Oregon, O. (CH). Upland Sandpipers were recorded through Sept. 16 with a maximum of 17 in Knox, Ind., Aug. 8 (DJ). A late Solitary Sandpiper appeared at Gary, Ind., Oct. 23 (SJ). Willets were more numerous than last year with 12 reports from all states Aug. 3-Sept. 14. Red Knots were only reported from Ohio and Illinois with 1-4 along the Great Lakes through Sept. 26 and scattered inland singles including one at L. St. Mary's, O., Oct. 23 (CM, JHn).

A Purple Sandpiper was found at Chicago Nov. 7 (JL) and three appeared at Huron, O., Nov. 24-25 (JP *et al.*). Normally an uncommon or rare fall migrant, White-rumped Sandpiper was widely distributed with reports of 1-10 from all states. Singles lingered through Nov. 10 at Louisville (BPB), Nov. 15 at Metzger Marsh W.M.A., O. (JP) and Nov. 26 at Waukegan, Ill. (†RB). Baird's Sandpipers were equally numerous with a maximum of 11 in Dickin-son, Ia. (DH). Several Baird's were reported to have lingered as late as Nov. 21. Since they are not known to be late migrants and should be in winter plumage by then, November Baird's sightings should be documented. Dunlin were numerous with 1000 at Ottawa N.W.R., O., Nov. 7 and many reports of 100-400. Long-billed Dowitchers are proving to be fairly common Great Lakes migrants with maxima of 110 at Metzger Marsh W.M.A., O., Oct. 12 (TL) and 45 at L. Calumet, Ill., Oct. 10 (JL). Up to six were reported from scattered inland locations with a late migrant at C.O.N.W.R., Nov. 23 (JR). Stilt Sandpipers were also numerous with a Great Lakes peak of 157 at Winous Pt., Ottawa, O., Aug. 9 (JP *et al.*) and 4 inland reports of 35-68; many lingered into late October. Fifty W. Sandpipers at Hoover Res., O., Sept. 18 comprised a noteworthy inland concentration (J). Smaller numbers were scattered across all states with late birds at Alum Creek Res., O., Nov. 14 (JM) and two at Green River L., Ky., Nov. 28 (†JE). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were widespread in Ohio but scarce elsewhere; as many as nine were observed Aug. 25-Oct. 1.



Ruff, Fremont Co., Ia., Sept. 11, 1982. Photo/B.J. Rose.

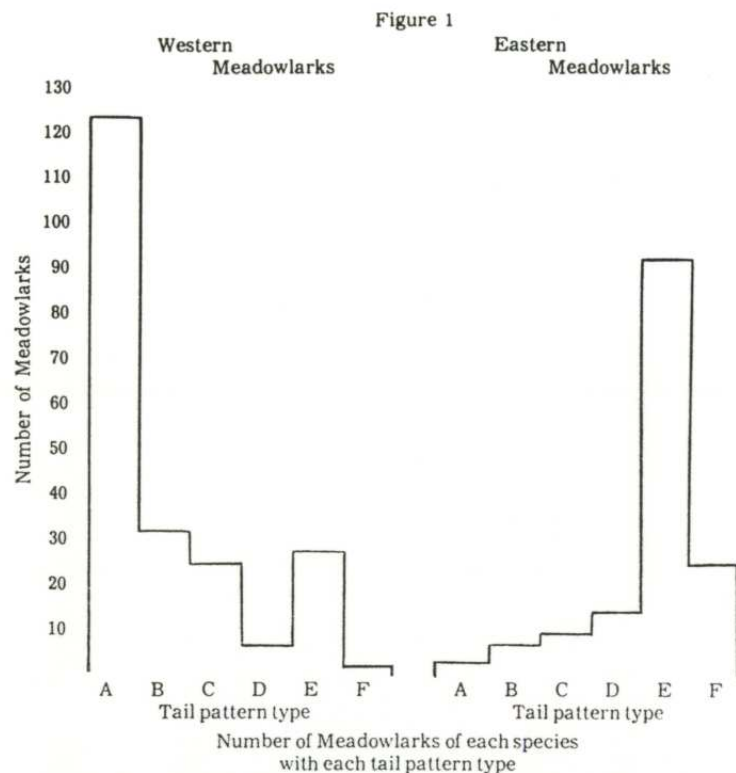
Between 1-3 Marbled Godwits appeared along L. Erie through Oct. 14 and appeared at single locations in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana Aug. 15-Oct. 5. As many as 13 Hudsonian Godwits were observed along w. L. Erie through Oct. 27 while 1-3 were encountered at 3 Illinois and 2 inland Ohio sites Aug. 8-Sept. 26. A Ruff near Tabor Sept. 8-12 provided a second record for Iowa (†RS, m.ob., ph.). Along the Great Lakes, Sanderlings peaked with 53 at Headlands S.P., O. (TL). They also lingered fairly late with Nov. 13 sightings from Chicago (JL) and Brookville Res., Ind. (TP). A total of 19 Am. Avocet sightings from all states was rather high. The largest flock—sixteen—was in St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 25 (P & PH) while two at Louisville Nov. 13 was the latest report (DN *et al.*). An early Red Phalarope returned to Cleveland Sept. 3-8 (M). Singles appeared at 3 other L. Erie locations through Nov. 21 and inland at Greenhills, O., Sept. 25 (†NW) and Spfld., Sept. 19 & Oct. 3 (†H). Wilson's Phalaropes were scarce except along

L. Erie where the maximum daily count was 20. One at L. St. Mary's, O., Nov. 7 was late (†JSh). Northern Phalaropes were again fairly numerous with a L. Erie maximum of 13 at Oregon Sept. 17 (CH) while 1-3 were reported from 11 inland sites in Ohio, Iowa and Illinois.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — An imm. Pomarine Jaeger was thoroughly documented from L. Carlyle, Ill., Nov. 18-30 (BR, †RG, m.ob.). At least three different Parasitic Jaegers were noted along L. Erie Sept. 27-Nov. 13 (†m.ob.) and one was observed at I.B.S.P., Oct. 2 (JN *et al.*) Four additional unidentified jaegers were reported including one at E. Alton, Ill., Nov. 2 (BR *et al.*). Glaucous Gulls returned to the Great Lakes Nov. 12 while inland singles appeared in Buchanan, Nov. 15 (†L), Spfld., Nov. 27 (H) and Schuyler, Ill., Dec. 4 (RCh). A Great Black-backed Gull at Michigan City, Ind., Aug. 21 (†KB *et al.*) provided the only acceptable report away from L. Erie. Now regular there, at least seven different Lesser Black-backed Gulls were discovered along L. Erie; one Oct. 14, the remainder during November (m.ob.). Thayer's Gulls were documented from 3 Great Lakes locations Oct. 22-Nov. 29 and an immature was studied at E. Alton, Ill., Nov. 3-6 (†RG, m.ob.). Repeating 1981, an ad. California Gull was discovered at E. Alton, Ill., Oct. 31 (†RG, †PS). Between 1000-2000+ Ring-billed Gulls occupied lakes in Iowa and w. Kentucky after Oct. 31. The only Black-headed Gull was encountered at Lorain, O., Sept. 2 (†JP) while single Laughing Gulls were found at Madison, Ill., Sept. 17 (BR), Starve I., O., Sept. 26 (†J *et al.*) and Spfld., Sept. 27-30 (H). Franklin's Gulls invaded the e. states with 88 at L. Chautauqua, Ill., Oct. 31 (TPu) plus Oct. 20 sightings of 24 at Chicago (PC, HR), 23 at Spfld. (H) and 20 at L. Waveland, Ind. (†AB). Between 5-12 were reported from 3 additional locations Oct. 17-31 e. to C.J. Brown Res., O. (CM *et al.*). As many as four Little Gulls were scattered along L. Erie after Sept. 22. Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported from 2 L. Erie and 2 L. Michigan locations Oct. 22-Nov. 27 (†m.ob.) and one appeared inland at E. Alton, Ill., Oct. 29 (†RG). Five Sabine's Gulls along the Great Lakes Sept. 18-Nov. 13 represented a good fall flight (†m.ob.).

Terns were generally scarce along L. Michigan while L. Erie maxima included 400 Forster's and several groups of 1000-3000 Com. Terns during late August and early September. A Forster's Tern at Merom power plant Nov. 21 was late (DJ). One or two Least Terns were reported from 6 sites in all states except Ohio and Missouri July 30-Sept. 6. Caspian Terns were numerous along the Great Lakes with a maximum of 228 at Huron, O. (TL) and lingered through Nov. 5 along L. Erie. Smaller numbers appeared inland including 50 at Saylorville Res., Ia., Sept. 18 (RL). Black Terns were scarce except at Cleveland where 600-1000 were present during mid-August and one lingered through Oct. 31 (†RH *et al.*). An Ancient Murrelet was thoroughly studied and photographed at Evanston Nov. 16-21, providing a second record for Illinois (†GR, m.ob., ph.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Ground Dove was briefly observed at Brazil, Ind., Aug. 21 (†AB), providing a third sighting for that state. Cuckoos lingered at many areas. Latest of four November Yellow-billed was a freshly dead bird found at Chicago Nov. 22 (*PC) while Black-billed remained through Oct. 31 at Carbondale, Ill. (KM). A Groove-billed Ani at Chicago Sept. 24-25 (†JL) provided this fall's only sighting. Barn Owl reports included an injured bird at Dearborn, Mo., Nov. 5 and 1-2 at Urbana, Mo., into October (GT *et al.*), Stockton, Mo., Oct. 25 (JW) and Chicago Nov. 25+ (AA). Snowy Owls were scarce with only 3 sightings from Illinois, Indiana and Ohio Nov. 26-30. Two ad. Burrowing Owls were observed with three young at Sioux Center, Ia., Aug. 2 (†DH) and a migrant was discovered in a N. Kansas City warehouse Sept. 29 (*vide* JO). Other migrant owls were also scarce. Only 1-2 Long-eareds were found at 5 locations, 1-8 Short-eareds at 12 sites and 1-2 Saw-whets at 6 locations; none were observed in Kentucky. Unusual in n.w. Missouri, a Chuck-will's-widow was heard calling in Holt Aug. 6 (L). A road-killed Whip-poor-will in Tippecanoe, Ind., Oct. 3 was late (DA). Noteworthy Com. Nighthawk concentrations consisted of 788 and 2430 at Danville, Ill., Aug. 30-31 (J & ME) and 1350 at Chicago Sept. 13 (AA). One at Louisville Nov. 11 was extraordinary (HF). Chimney Swifts were abundant, especially in Ohio and Illinois where several flocks of 1000-1500 were reported. The largest reported Ruby-throated Hummingbird concentration was 13, the latest sightings Oct. 16 in Missouri and Indiana. "Red-shafted" Flickers were observed at Willow Slough, Ia., Oct. 20 (BW) and Springfield, Mo., Oct. 10 (m.ob.). A Pileated Woodpecker near St. Joseph, Mo., Sept. 27-Oct.



An analysis of the Breeding Bird Surveys suggests that only 9.8 percent of the meadowlarks breeding in the state are Easterns. In most of the state, Easterns constitute 5 percent or less of the meadowlark population. Therefore, in most of the state there are more breeding Western Meadowlarks that could be identified as Easterns by tail pattern than there are real Easterns.

Hybrid Meadowlarks

Meadowlarks rarely hybridize, so it is probably best to ignore the slight possibility that the bird one is observing might be a hybrid. Lanyon (1967) points out that female F1 hybrids resemble Easterns, while the males resemble Easterns except for the extensive yellow in their cheeks. Do not be in a hurry to call meadowlarks of this appearance hybrids; a very worn Western in late summer may be dark enough to look like an Eastern with yellow cheeks.

Summary

In Iowa, meadowlarks should be identified by call note or song whenever possible. Distribution, habitat, and appearance are useful in some cases (Table 3). Since meadowlark plumages are so variable, it is wise not to identify a bird to species by appearance unless at least two of the three critical areas (back, cheek, and tail) have the color typical of the same species.

Table 3. Summary of characteristics useful for identifying meadowlarks

Characteristic	Western	Eastern
Call note	Bic!	Dzert!
Song	Long melodius warble	Sad descending whistle
Range	Common except in SE Iowa	Uncommon except in SE Iowa; rare in NW Iowa
Habitat	Uplands	Floodplains
Back color	Paler (winger only)	Darker
Cheek color	Extensive yellow (often)	No yellow (usually)
Tail pattern	Black bars separated (usually)	Black bars merge (usually)

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 Silcock, W. R. 1983. Personal communication.

A Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) in Southwest Iowa

A Discussion of the Patterns of Occurrence of this Species in North America

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A juvenile male Ruff was seen in Fremont County, Iowa on September 8-12, 1982, in the company of Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpipers. In size, it was slightly taller than the yellowlegs, with somewhat shorter, greenish legs, and it had a noticeably bulkier body, these points indicating that it was a male. The bird was strikingly buffy, especially on the upper breast and on the generally unmarked head. The feathers of the back and wings were also very buffy, and were prominently edged with grayish-white. These plumage characters are typical of a juvenile bird. The bill was similar in shape and proportions to that of a Pectoral Sandpiper, being rather stout at the base and slightly decurved; it was black. In flight the sides of the rump were a showy white, meeting in the upper tail covert area to form a V. This effect is well shown in a photograph in Roberson (1980: *Rare Birds of the West Coast*). The overall impression given by the bird when in flight was that of a large Pectoral Sandpiper.

The documentation for this sighting, with photographs, was accepted by the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and constitutes only the second record for Iowa, the first being one collected at Burlington in southeast Iowa May 10, 1940 (*Auk* 58:257).

In North America the Ruff has been traditionally considered to be a "regular fall visitor (rarely spring) from Eurasia" to both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, straggling inland to the Great Lakes area (Robbins, 1966: *Birds of North America*; Peterson, 1982: *Birds East of the Rockies*). More recent data however is beginning to indicate a migration pattern typical of shorebird species breeding in North America. Terres (1980: *Encyclopedia of North American Birds*) states that the

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Ruff is "becoming a regular spring and fall transient, especially along the Atlantic coast, from Canada to North Carolina, and also reported inland." Indicative of the numbers recorded at certain places near the Atlantic coast are the 10-12 birds reported in 1980, 10 in 1978, and 11 in 1976 in the Hudson-Delaware Region in *American Birds* (34:760). It was stated by Paxton et al (AB 34:760) that in this Region "Ruffs appear early and with remarkable regularity at traditional Delaware Valley sites, mid-March to mid-April, along with the first yellowlegs flocks." Many of these spring birds are males in breeding plumage. Along the Atlantic coast it appears that few, if any, Ruffs overwinter, even in Florida, where the species is at best accidental (Lane, 1981: *A Birder's Guide to Florida*). This situation is in contrast to that on the Pacific coast, where there is a pattern of Ruffs wintering in California between late October and early April (Roberson, 1980).

While "no birds in breeding plumage nor any that could be termed spring migrants have been found as yet" in California (Roberson, 1980), there is a peak of occurrences in September-early October, "perhaps all juveniles" (Roberson, 1980). Garrett and Dunn (1981: *Birds of Southern California*) consider the Ruff to be a casual fall transient and winter visitor along the southern California coast, with two spring records, the authors suggesting that the latter records (March 30 and April 1) may refer to locally wintering birds. Whether the birds wintering in California are juveniles or adults is not discussed by either Roberson (1980) or Garrett and Dunn (1981), but the data presented by Roberson (1980) suggest that many, if not all, are indeed juveniles. Molt into adult plumages (especially adult male breeding) would not have occurred by the time these birds leave the Pacific coast (Cramp et al, 1983: *Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Vol. 3). Further north on the Pacific coast, in Washington and Oregon, all records are in fall and mainly of juveniles, ranging from August to October, thus fitting the pattern of migrating of juveniles seen in California. Significantly, however, in British Columbia the records are primarily in the period late June to early August, indicating that these birds are adults, rather than juveniles (Roberson, 1980).

In light of the apparently differing patterns of occurrence on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, it is of interest to examine the available records from the upper midwest, specifically those from Iowa and the states contiguous with Iowa. In these states, there are some 50 records of Ruff (see appendix). Of these, about 40 are from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, and only about nine from North Dakota, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri, with none from South Dakota or Nebraska. These records are shown graphically in Figure 1, and indicate a pattern of spring migration from April to early June (including several records of males in breeding plumage), followed by a significant early fall movement (late June to July) suggestive of post-breeding adults, and a later fall movement (mid-August to late October) presumably of juveniles. This pattern closely resembles that seen on the Atlantic coast, as it involves both spring and fall migration, presence of males in breeding plumage in spring, and has no wintering population, all three points being in contrast to the situation on the lower Pacific coast.

The concentration of records in the northeasternmost three states of the group of states surrounding Iowa (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois) may be due to birder concentration, but seems more likely to be a reflection of the probability that significant migration of Ruffs occurs as far west as the Great Lakes region. It is interesting that while this concentration of records is from the three Great Lakes states nearest Iowa, most of the records are in fact from parts of those states away from the Lakes themselves, indicating that migration in the Great Lakes area is part of a broad-front movement which includes the eastern United States rather than being related to the Great Lakes themselves.

The migration pattern suggested by the records from the interior and the

Atlantic coast is strongly indicative of a breeding population in North America. To date, breeding in North America has only been proven in Alaska, and even there on only very few occasions (Roberson, 1980), but the number of records of Ruff in recent years indicates that breeding may be far more extensive than is currently assumed. The information discussed above from the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and from the upper midwest indicates that migration of Ruff in North America takes place in a southeastward direction from northern Canada in fall, including the Great Lakes region and points further east, arriving at the Atlantic coast between southeast Canada and North Carolina, from whence the birds fly to South America across the western Atlantic. This pattern closely resembles that of both species of yellowlegs (Cramp et al, 1983). In more detail, this migration pattern may be developed as follows. In fall, adults migrate during the period late June to August from Arctic breeding sites primarily in a southeastward direction, across the Great Lakes area, arriving at the Atlantic coast mainly within the United States, but north of North Carolina, and then on to South America. The few records of Ruffs from British Columbia and the upper midwest during this period in summer presumably represent the southernmost extent of this southeastward migration pathway, the significant increase in the number of records in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois indicating the location of the nearest point to Iowa of the migration pathway used by significant numbers of Ruffs. Juveniles appear to follow the same route in fall at a somewhat later time, mainly during mid-August through late October, with the exception of a few that seem to straggle south along the Pacific coast and over winter in California. In spring, most birds appear to move north primarily on the Atlantic coast, but also in the interior, as there are no spring records from the Pacific coast. These birds will have returned from wintering areas in South America presumably by non-stop flight, as there are very few Caribbean records (Ridgely, 1981: *Birds of Panama*; Norton, 1981: AB35:232). It is significant in this respect that only two species of shorebirds migrate in spring directly without stopping from northern South America to the United States (rather than through the Caribbean islands or via Central America), these being Greater Yellowlegs and Short-billed Dowitcher (Cramp et al, 1983), both species being favored companions of Ruffs. It seems likely that Ruff indeed winters in South America because its favored congeners, the yellowlegs, do so, and because this distribution pattern resembles that seen in the Old World, where Ruff winters primarily in Africa, while breeding in arctic Asia. Significantly, Norton (AB 35:232) mentions "recent records from Peru", and also cites a January 28, 1972 record from Puerto Rico, indicating that a few birds might winter in the Caribbean basin rather than in South America. That Ruffs winter in southern California and rarely in the Caribbean area is analogous to the situation in the Old World, as shown by Cramp et al (1983), whereby there are isolated wintering areas in coastal Europe, rather far north of the usual wintering grounds in Africa.

Appendix: records of Ruff from Iowa and contiguous states

Iowa:	
May 10, 1940	Auk 58:257
Sept 8-12, 1982 (juv male)	AB 37:187
North Dakota:	
May 1-9, 1978 (brdg male)	AB 32:1023
May 8-10, 1979 (male, prob female)	AB 33:783
July 7, 1982 (brdg male)	AB 36:991
South Dakota:	
no records	

Nebraska:

no records

Kansas:

June 22, 1982

AB 36:992

Missouri:

Apr 17, 1982

AB 36:858

Aug 26, 1972

AB 27:68

Aug 28, 1974

AB 29:66

Minnesota:

Apr 26-May 2, 1971

Green and Janssen, 1975:

May 9, 1982 (brdg male; female)

Minnesota Birds

AB 36:855

May 11, 1975

AB 29:856

May 13, 1973

Green and Janssen

May 23-30, 1964

Green and Janssen

June 8, 1977

AB 31:1144

July 9, 1979 (male)

AB 33:865

July 22, 1978

AB 32:1163

Aug 18, 1979

AB 34:164

Sept 12, 1976 (2)

AB 31:181

Oct 2, 1976

AB 31:181

Wisconsin:

May 7, 1982 (winter male)

AB 36:855

May 10-11, 1982 (partial brdg male)

AB 36:855

May 14, 1977 (brdg male)

AB 31:1004

May 14-16, 1981 (subad male)

AB 35:876

May 15-19, 1980 (female)

AB 34:779

Aug 14, 1976

AB 31:181

Oct 30, 1982 (4)

AB 37:183

Illinois:

Apr 6, 1980

AB 34:782

Apr 10, 1982 (male)

AB 36:858

Apr 18-19, 1981

AB 35:830

Apr 20, 1980

AB 34:782

Apr 23-May 3, 1982 (female)

AB 36:858

Apr 26, 1969 (male)

Bohlen, 1978: Birds of

May 3, 1969 (brdg male)

Illinois

Bohlen

May 5-6, 1979

AB 34:169

May 8-9, 1981

AB 35:830

May 9, 1973 (brdg male)

Bohlen

May 9, 1980

AB 34:782

June 29, 1976 (male)

Bohlen

July 3, 1962 (male)

Bohlen

July 4-5, 1959 (brdg male)

Bohlen

July 5, 1980

AB 34:900

July 16-19, 1978 (changing plge)

AB 32:1169

July 18, 1971 (brdg male)

Bohlen

July 21-22, 1964 (male)

Bohlen

July 28-Aug 4, 1978

AB 33:183

Aug 13, 1978

AB 33:183

Sept 2, 1979

AB 34:168

Sept 15-20, 1976 (male)

Bohlen

TV Tower Kill in Central Iowa

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In the past several decades, there have been numerous studies documenting bird kills at TV towers, including large kills in Illinois (Brewer and Ellis 1958), Missouri (Eler and Hansen 1967), Wisconsin (Kemper et al. 1966), and Minnesota (Kemper et al. 1966). To date, the only documentation of such kills in Iowa that we are aware of is the listing of birds killed at the Alleman TV tower near Alleman in fall 1973 and spring and fall 1974 (Mosman 1975).

On the morning of 14 September 1982, Dinsmore received word that there had been a sizeable kill at the Alleman tower the previous night. From 1 to 3 p.m. we collected carcasses of birds from the base of that tower and a second tower about ¼ mile to the west. The Alleman towers consist of two 2,000 foot towers, about 1 mile south of Alleman in Polk County. Of the 384 birds we collected, 365 were from the east tower and only 19 from the west tower. At both towers, we only searched the open area directly under the tower and extending out for a radius of about 50 yards and also on cleared areas under the guy wires to the north and southwest. The triple sets of guy wires extend out for at least several hundred yards beyond that, but much of that land was in crops, mainly soybeans and was too dense for us to search in a meaningful way. Most birds were found under the tower, the guy wires, or to the south of them, suggesting that the bird's momentum had carried them downflight after they struck the tower or wires. This arrangement of carcasses around the tower is similar to the pattern noted by Brewer and Ellis (1958). Most of the birds were dead but there were a number of injured or stunned birds. We have not included those that were still alive (about a dozen) but they seemed to be representative of the species that were found dead and thus their exclusion should not affect any conclusions we draw here.

The 384 birds represent 33 species plus one unidentified Empidonax flycatcher (Table 1). The best represented groups were the warblers (17 species, 141 individuals), vireos (3 species, 135 individuals), and thrushes (4 species, 63 individuals). The kill seemed to be representative of a typical assemblage of non-

Species	No. Killed
Sora (<i>Porzana carolina</i>)	3
Black-billed Cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>)	1
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>)	1
Empidonax sp.	1
Veery (<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>)	24
Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>Catharus minimus</i>)	4
Swainson's Thrush (<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>)	33
Wood Thrush (<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>)	2
Gray Catbird (<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)	19
Warbling Vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>)	1
Philadelphia Vireo (<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>)	1
Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)	133
Tennessee Warbler (<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>)	15
Nashville Warbler (<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>)	5
Yellow Warbler (<i>Dendroica petechia</i>)	3
Chestnut-sided Warbler (<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>)	7

82-30

Species: Ruff
Date: September 8-12, 1982
Observer: W. Ross Silcock, RR2, Malvern, Iowa 51551

Location: 4 miles east of Tabor, in Fremont County
Habitat: Lake Mar-I-War, being a waste disposal pond at Mar-I-War Farms' hog operation.

(This account was written October 30 after many attempts to locate my original field notes taken with the bird under observation. I still have not found them.)

During fall migration, many shorebirds of several species stop at the waste disposal ponds at Mar-I-War Farms. On September 8 as I drove up in my pickup, I flushed a flock of shorebirds which on prior days had included Lesser Yellowlegs, and Pectoral, Western, Least, and Semipalmated Sandpipers. However on September 8 as the flock flushed I glimpsed a large shorebird which showed a large amount of white in the rump area. Of course this aroused my curiosity, so later in the day I approached more carefully with 10 x 50 binoculars and the sun behind me (I was looking towards the southeast). Together with two Lesser Yellowlegs I saw a rather large shorebird some 50 feet away with the following features:

Size and shape Slightly taller than a Lesser Yellowlegs, with somewhat shorter legs but noticeably bulkier body. The body shape resembled that of a Willet; indeed the appearance of the body and legs was very similar to that species, but the head and neck were rather smaller and less bulky. The bird was much larger than the largest Pectoral Sandpipers present.

Bill and legs The bill was rather heavy, much more so than Lesser Yellowlegs, but, relative to head size, about as bulky and shaped the same as that of a Pectoral. The bill was dark, with no discernable pale areas. The legs were greenish-black, not as dark as those of nearby Semipalmated Sandpipers.

Plumage The striking coloration of the plumage was a major feature of the bird, and what first drew my attention. Overall it appeared buffy brown beside the Yellowlegs, being especially buffy on the foreneck and breast, which was a biblike buffy area devoid of markings and in extent about the same as the gorget of a Pectoral, but without the V extending towards the breast. The belly was white. The crown was also buffy, but had dark streaks from front to rear. In front of the eye was a thin dark line in the loreal area.

The mantle, scapulars, wing coverts, primaries, and secondaries were all widely and brightly edged with buffy and whitish. This feature was very noticeable, giving the bird an overall bright appearance. Also noticeable was the length of the primary feathers and their flexibility, as only a slight breeze was needed to fluff them up.

Flight No vocalisation was heard when the bird was flushed. Obvious features in flight were the upper tail and rump and the upper wing surfaces. The tail pattern resembled that of a Pectoral Sandpiper, but the white edges were far more obvious, extending forward to meet with the flanks. At the rear the white tail edges met to form a V as the bird flew away from me. The upper wing surface showed a narrow stripe, more obvious than in a Pectoral Sandpiper, but less so than in a Sanderling.

Identification I immediately suspected that the bird was a Ruff (although I have no previous experience with this species) due to its size, buffy color, and tail-rump pattern. I also recalled that Ruffs in non-breeding plumage were somewhat like a "brown Yellowlegs". The white V pattern of the rump was a little confusing, until I found a picture of a Ruff in flight in Roberson's book Rare Birds of the West Coast. This bird appears identical to the one I saw. The bird I saw had a dark bill without the pale base shown in standard field guides and mentioned by Roberson. However Johnsgard implies that the bill need not necessarily have a yellow base in his statement "females and winter-plumaged males ... [have] a bill that is usually yellowish at the base" (The Plovers, Snipes, and Sandpipers of the World). Because this bird was a little taller than the Lesser Yellowlegs it was with, as well as being markedly bulkier, it was probably a male. Roberson states that juvenals "are typically buffy-orange on the face and breast, and have each back and wing covert feather broadly edged with buff", which suggests that the bird I saw was a juvenal male Ruff.

North-Central U.S. Records of Ruff There are some 40 records from the three Great Lakes States of Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin, although most of the records are away from the lakes. The records range from March to October, but most are in April, May, August, and September, thus coinciding with normal shorebird migration dates. There seem to be as many spring as fall records. Moving west, there are fewer records. In Iowa, there are but two including the one described here, the first being May 10, 1940 in Louisa County. Missouri also has two records, both in late August: August 26, 1972 at Squaw Creek NWR and August 28, 1974 in St Charles County. Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota have no records, but there are two North Dakota records, both at Grand Forks in 1978 and again in 1979 for two birds May 8-10.

RUFF

September 10, 1982

9:45 a.m.

Clear, Sunny; Sun behind ruff

Farm Pond, Malvern, Iowa

Description:

The ruff was slightly longer than Lesser Yellowlegs present and considerably heavier, with a bulky, willet-like look. The legs were greenish, thicker and slightly shorter than Lesser Yellowlegs. Neck, cheeks, and upper breast were very buffy--fading to whitish-gray under the tail. Back feathers were dark brown, widely edged with buff giving the back a definitely "scaly" appearance. These back feathers were long, and appeared "loosely attached", easily ruffled by the wind. The bill was dark, heavy at the base, straight and pointed. There was a small area of light feathering around the base of the bill. The bird had a narrow cap of darker feathers--almost reddish. In flight, the wings were long, and pointed with a thin white wing stripe. The flight was very swift and direct. Also in flight, the white ovals on the tail were noted. (I also saw the bird at 6:15 p.m. when in better light, as the bird came in and landed, these ovals nearly formed an inverted V.) The ruff also had a thin black stripe through the eye. In actions, the bird was more deliberate in feeding (compared to L. Yellowlegs), slower, and did not "bob".

Books consulted: Rare Birds of the West Coast --Rowbertson
Larousse Guide to Birds of Britain and Europe-Bruun
Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe--

R.T. Peterson

Equipment: 7 x 26 Bushnell Custom Compact Binoculars

Distance from bird: 100 feet

Tanya Bray
 9708 Grover
 Omaha, Nebr 68124

Documentation of unusual sight record

Ruff-1

Sept 10, 11, 1982

"Lake Mari-war", a hog lagoon $7\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of Malvern, La.

Description: Size + Shape: larger + bulkier than the lesser Yellowlegs with it. Browner. Legs stouter + proportionately shorter. (about the same absolute length). Head + bill: Bill about same length as the L. Yellowlegs' bill, but stouter. Bill black. Face buff. Crown reddish brown. Dark line through eye + ending close behind it. Underparts: Neck + breast buff, the buff ending in a sharp line on the breast. Flanks light buff. Belly + under tail coverts white. Legs gray, or perhaps greenish. Upperparts: Back of neck dark. Back feathers dark brown with wide buff edges. Wings: Primaries with light edges. Under wing coverts white. Tail: End of tail dark. Extensive white at base.

Similar species: Looks like a big stout dark-legged Yellowlegs, or a brown, heavily patterned Willet.

Factors influencing the identification: I couldn't identify this on my own. Ross Selcock + B. J. Rose were discussing Ruff field marks and wrote the description on Sept. 10. Bird 75' south + south west, seen with 8.5 binocs + 20x telescope. Late morning. Sun. No book, but with Ross + B.J. I didn't really need one. Plenty of time for leisurely observation.

Documentation written Nov. 24 from notes taken Sept. 10 + Sept 11 while watching the bird.

Barbara L. Wilson
Rt 1 Box 41
Hastings, La 5-1540

What species? Ruff How many? 1 juvenileLocation? Pig lot 3 mi. e. of Tabor, Fremont Co., IowaType of habitat? hog water waste settling pit with shallow water and flatsWhen? date(s): 10 Sept 1982 time: 6:35-6:37 to 7:10-7:22Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240others with you: Peter C. Petersenothers before or after you: W. Ross Silcock, many observers

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.

A long-legged, upright shorebird, slightly larger than a Lesser Yellowlegs it was with and heavier bodied. Straight, dark (black) bill, thick at base and extending a mm or so up the forehead. Bill much heavier than Lesser Yellowlegs and perhaps longer. Head pale gray with faint eyestripe and light brown cap. Breast very light buff, not uniform. No spots or streaks on breast or abdomen. Abdomen light gray. Back of neck lighter than cap, darker than rest of neck. Back and wing feathers dark brown-black with light buffy edging. Edging wide on tertials and primaries, fine on upper back. Tail in flight shows white V at base. Although white on base of tail appeared to be on the edge, later it was seen to go all the way across. Legs pale brownish-green and thicker than Lesser Yellowlegs. Feet appeared quite large. Bird standing or probing. Did not bob like Lesser Yellowlegs. Not heard. A thin white wing stripe was seen in flight.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Yellow-legs -- direct comparison.

Stilt Sandpiper -- too large, different shape, etc.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
45 feet (paced). Late afternoon sun from 45 degree angle. Also flushed and flew directly overhead. 8 X binoculars, 20 X scope, 15 X camera lens. Photos taken.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Life bird. Quite familiar with other Iowa shorebirds.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Discussed findings with Petersen while viewing bird.
How long before field notes made? minutes after each observation. this form completed? 16 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

What species? Ruff ♂ How many? 1 imm

Location? Hog waste pit, 3.5 miles NW of Randolph, Mills Co, IA.

Type of habitat? Hog waste pit surrounded by hog confinement buildings and cropland.

When? date(s): Sept. 12, 1982 time: 9:50 to 10:12

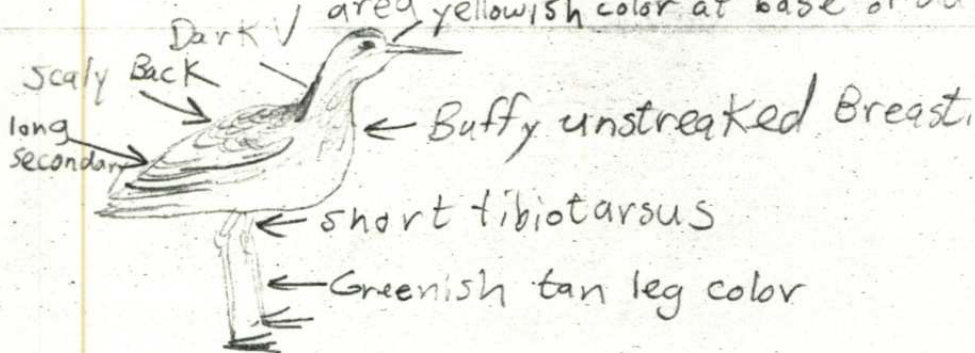
Who? your name and address: Joe Schaufenbuel, 924 Pammel Ct., Ames 50010.

others with you: Lynn Schaufenbuel, W. Ross Silcock

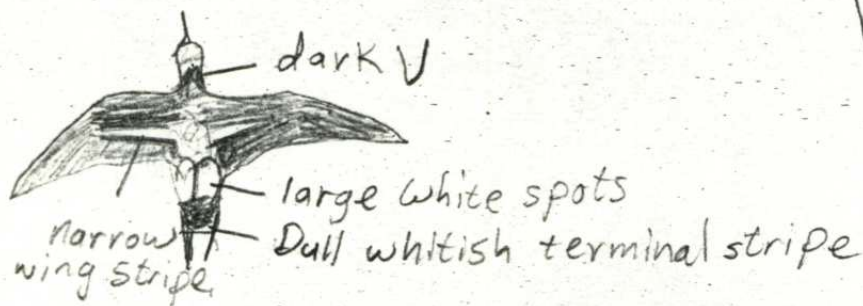
others before or after you: Pete Petersen, Tom Kent.

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.

Dark V area yellowish color at base of dark medium length bill.



Description on Back.



Similar species and how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: excellent, though slight cloud cover. Bird was observed with 45x telescope at 25 yds.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None with Ruff.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Holarctic Shore birds. Peterson, Pough, Robbins.

How long before field notes made? Sighting this form completed? 4 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

Joe Schaufenbuel

A plain-looking shorebird, larger than a Lesser Yellowlegs (Directly compared) with a bill length similar to that species but thicker. Seemed bulkier than that species, also with a shorter tibiotarsus (compared directly) and thicker neck with heavier set ^{feathers}.

Eye was dark. Bill was dark with yellow at base. Head-brownish, streaked cap, pale superciliary. Front of neck to breast was buffy. Back of neck darker with vague streaking, and becoming dark and making a dark "V" on nape. Belly white. Back feathers and scapularies dark, edged in pale buffy tan giving a scaly appearance. Legs were tan-green. Secondaries were rather long almost as long as primaries and pale-edged. Tail was brownish with a pale narrow terminal band. In flight the bird had slower, more deliberate wing beats than the Lesser Yellowlegs and showed a large white area on rump which was partially divided by a central bar.