

Red Knot  
19 Sep 1985  
Fisher L., Polk Co., IA  
\*S. Dinsmore, \*R. Myers, \*J. Fuller  
also 09/20; IBL 55:125; 56:43

Record Number: 85-18  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore  
Robert K. Myers  
Jim Fuller

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:125  
Records Committee: IBL 56:43

VOTE: 1-I, 6-II

II, well described.

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

85-18

What species? Red Knot How many? 1Location? Fisher Lake, n. of Des Moines, Polk Co., IA

Type of habitat? \_\_\_\_\_

When? date(s): 19 Sep, 1985 time: 5:00 PM to 6:30 PMWho? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010others with you: Bob Myers, Perry

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 first saw the bird in the company of several long-billed Dowitchers. The bird was almost the same size, but had much shorter legs, a shorter bill, and was overall paler than the dowitchers. Although my first reaction was that the bird was a Sanderling, the size and grayer back eliminated it as a possibility. I then recognized the bird as being almost identical to the Red knots I saw in 1984 at Hampton, Ill. and at Hendrickson Marsh.

The bird was larger than a Killdeer and much chunkier. The legs were short and dark. The bill was black, short, and rather thick. It appeared to be the same length as the head. The bird's back was gray and each feather had white edging, giving the bird a scaly look. The wings were also mottled gray, except for black tips to the primaries and a faint white wing stripe, seen when the bird lifted its wings. The bird also had a faint white eye stripe. The underparts were mostly white except for some gray which extended onto the breast from the throat. The tail was white with black bars.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Fall Dowitchers have longer bills and legs, a darker tail, longer neck, darker back, and darker underparts. Sanderling is smaller, much whiter, has bolder wing stripe and lacks a white eye stripe. (I saw several later in the day.)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Light was excellent - sky partly cloudy - sun off to one side. Estimated viewing distance of 25-35 yards. I used a B&L 20x Spotting scope.Previous experience with species and similar ones:  
I have seen lots of knots on east coast.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? 3 hours

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

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

85-18

1. Species Red Knot (Calidris canutus) 2. Number 1  
3. Location Fisher Lake - Polk Co. Approx. 2 mi. SE of Saylorville Dam  
4. Date: September 19, 1985 5. Time Bird Seen: 6:13 P.M. to 6:45 P.M.

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

~~Bird was a Killdeer sized shorebird that was heavier (chunckier)~~  
than the Killdeer and Lesser Yellowlegs standing near it.

Overall color was gray with a faintly mottled back. The gray gave way on the lower breast and belly to a lighter gray or off-white. The dividing line was easily seen but not sharp. Primaries were blackish - especially toward the tips. The head showed a darkish line from base of bill thru eye with a whitish superciliary line above the black eye. Rump was whitish with very fine darker (maybe black) barring. When bird stretched its wings a faint white wing stripe was noted.

Bill was quite stout, straight, black and about the length of the bird's head. The black legs were fairly short as the bird appeared quite "squaty". Legs were much shorter than Killdeer or Lesser Yellowlegs.

7. Description of voice, if heard: Not heard

8. Description of behavior: Bird was feeding on a mudflat. Feeding pattern was a slow deliberate pecking in the mud. Movement on foot was not rapid.

9. Habitat - general: Fisher Lake is a shallow lake that is drying down so there is little water left and mostly mud.

specific: Bird was feeding with many other shorebirds.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

Most everything I could think of was not as large and plump or had the same bill, legs and overall grayish coloration. Sanderling = too small, for

11. Distance (how measured)? Approx. 75 yd. (eyeball guess) 12. Optical equipment: 25 X scope  
example

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

Partly cloudy - sun to my left. Excellent viewing at times during observation

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

No experience with Red Knot but quite a lot of experience with most of our other shorebirds.

15. Other observers: Steve Dinsmore - found bird  
Gene Armstrong - Sept. 20

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Steve Dinsmore

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

None were needed, but I did check the National Geographic Guide merely to confirm what we knew.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

Notes taken on spot - documentation done 2 hrs. later - typed on Sept. 20.

Signature: Robert K. Myera Address: R.R. 2, Box 153

Date: Sept. 20, 1985 City, State: Perry, Iowa 50220

What species? RED KNOT (WINTER PLUMAGE) How many? 1 Location? FISHER LAKE - POLK COUNTYType of habitat? MUD FLAT WITH POOLS OF WATERWhen? date(s): 9/20/85 time: 9:00 AM 9:30 AM  
1:30 PM to 1:45 PMWho? your name and address: JIM FULLER, 6 LONGVIEW KNOLL, IOWA CITYothers with you: CAL KNIGHT, JANE FULLER

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.

GENERAL SIZE WAS SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN EITHER PECTORAL OR STILT SANDPIPERS IN SAME AREA, AND ABOUT THE SIZE OF BLACK BELLED PLOVER IN AREA. IT WAS "PLUMPER" THAN ANY OF THESE BIRDS THOUGH. GENERALLY GRAY AND WHITE. HEAD TOP AND BACK WERE GRAY WITHOUT STREAKING. SOME FEATHER EDGINGS SEEN ON WINGS. BELLY WAS WHITE WITH DARK SPOTS AND SHORT LINES BELOW WING AND ANTERIOR TO WING. DARK EYE LINE WITH WHITE STREAK ABOVE EYE. BILL WAS BLACK AND STRAIGHT AND OF MODERATE LENGTH (LONGER THAN THE BLACK BELLED PLOVER AND SHORTER THAN STILT SANDPIPER IN AREA). LEGS WERE DARK, BUT HAD A YELLOW-GREEN CAST IN GOOD LIGHT. RUMP WAS LIGHT AND WHEN BIRD RAISED WINGS, SUBTLE DARK LINES <sup>(BARRING)</sup> WERE VISIBLE ON THE RUMP, AND A NARROW WING STRIPE COULD BE SEEN.

Similar species and how eliminated: STILT SANDPIPER - "PLUMPER" SHAPE OF THIS BIRD, SHORTER + THICKER BILL, SHORTER LEGS, BARRING ON RUMP.  
BLACK BELLED PLOVER - LONGER BILL, YELLOW GREEN LEGS

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
PARTLY SUNNY - VIEWED FROM APPROX. 75 FEET - 100 FEET WITH 9X36 BINOCULARS AND 20X SPOTTING SCOPE.Previous experience with species and similar ones: 2 SEEN 9/84 IN WINTER PLUMAGEReferences and persons consulted before writing description: PETERSON GUIDEHow long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 10 HOURS

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