

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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Red Phalarope

19 Sep 1995

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

*Stephen J. Dinsmore

IBL 66:21, 96; Dinsmore 1996

Record Number: 95-44

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014 [*3/24/96]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:21

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Dinsmore, S. J. 1996. Red Phalaropes at Saylorville Reservoir.

IBL 66:113-114.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, 1st basic.

95-44

Killdeer and Lesser Yellowlegs. Shape and posture was most similar to Lesser Yellowlegs. The thin, straight, black bill was about as long as the head. The lower face was pale gray compared to the darker cap and nape. In addition to the smudged black across the breast, there was some fine barring around the throat. The lower breast, belly, and undertail coverts were white. The upper parts were dark due to black feathers, some of which had white or buff fringes at their tips. There were scattered gray feathers in the scapulars. Upon flushing the bird, I observed and photographed a V- or U-shaped white patch on the upper tail that pointed to the tip and had a black center proximally. The wings were plain except for a thin white wing bar. Jim Fuller and Chris Edwards noted that some of the back feathers were ruffled, and they saw chevrons on the sides extending to the legs.

I judged the bird as a female based on size and plumage and the plumage as mostly alternate based on the distribution of black and feather wear. The underparts would have more black in fresh spring plumage. This bird was seen by many birders and remained until at least 26 August. This is the third and earliest fall record of Ruff in Iowa. The others were juveniles east of Tabor in Fremont County from 8 to 12 September 1982 (Silcock 1983) and at Hendrickson Marsh in Story County on 1 and 2 September 1984 (Martsching 1986).

LITERATURE CITED

- Martsching, P. 1986. Ruff in Story County. *Iowa Bird Life* 86:64.
 Silcock, W. R. 1983. A Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) in southwest Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 53:87-90.

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RED PHALAROPES AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 19 September 1995 I arrived at Jester Park to look over the extensive mudflats at the north end of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. At 2:10 p.m., I noticed a phalarope swimming along the edge of the mudflat near several Killdeer. The bird was nearly as large as the Killdeer, although it was shorter legged. I watched the bird until 2:23 p.m. and noted the following. In general, it was a pale, stocky, plump, short-legged shorebird. The black bill was short, thick, blunt-tipped, and roughly equal to the length of the head. The head was white, except that the crown and back of the neck were black and there was a black spot around each eye. The underparts were entirely white. There was some very faint buffy color on the sides of the neck and shoulder. The mantle and scapulars were light gray with several small black patches. In flight, a clear white stripe extended across the bases of the flight feathers. The tail was dark, and the legs were black. Based on the mantle pattern and buffy color on the neck, I concluded the bird was in first-basic plumage.

On 22 October 1995, I was once again scanning the mudflats at the upper end of the lake when I saw another Red Phalarope. I watched the bird from 9:35-10:15 a.m. Initially, the bird associated with three Sanderlings. The head, neck, underparts, and vent were white except for a black cap and a black spot around each eye that extended posteriorly a short distance, and pale gray color extending up the back of the neck.



The mantle was entirely pale gray. The folded primaries appeared dark gray to black. The bill was black, about the length of the head, and had a stout, tubular appearance. The bird made several short flights, during which I noted the pale wing stripe contrasting with the dark upperwings and the dark tail. At a distance, the bird appeared so pale that it might easily have been overlooked as a Sanderling. Based on the mantle pattern and lack of any buffy wash on the neck and underparts, I concluded the bird was an adult in basic plumage. However, it is possible the bird was a juvenile that had already completed the molt to basic plumage. This bird remained in this area through 26 October and was seen by several others.

These are the seventh and eighth records of Red Phalarope in Iowa. There are four previous records from Saylorville Reservoir: 30 September-3 October 1988 (Dinsmore and Engebretsen 1989), 4 August 1991 (Dinsmore 1992), 25-30 September 1991 (Proescholdt 1992), and 26 October 1991 (Proescholdt 1992). The other two records are from 8-9 November 1992 at Rathbun Reservoir (Kent 1993) and 25, 29 November 1994 at Spirit Lake (Gordon Brown, pers. comm., Schoenewe 1996).

LITERATURE CITED

- Dinsmore, S. J. 1992. A second Red Phalarope at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 62:86-87.
 Dinsmore, S. J., and B. Engebretsen. 1989. Red Phalarope at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 59:19.
 Kent, T. H. 1993. Red Phalarope at Rathbun Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 63:82.
 Proescholdt, M. 1992. Two more Red Phalaropes at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 62:87-88.
 Schoenewe, L. A. 1996. Red Phalarope at Spirit Lake. *Iowa Bird Life* 66:111-112.

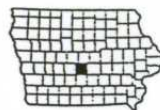
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RED KNOTS AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 1 September 1995 I observed a Red Knot with a group of about 100 shorebirds on a distant mudflat at the north end of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. I watched the bird at a distance of 300-400 m from 8:55-9:10 a.m. The bird was larger, stockier, and shorter-legged than several Lesser Yellowlegs and Stilt Sandpipers with which it was feeding. The bill was straight, thick, and about the same length as the head. The legs appeared dark at a distance. The underparts were white and appeared unmarked. The mantle and head were gray, similar to the color of a basic-plumaged Sanderling. When feeding, the wings appeared darker than the upperparts. The bird made two short flights. In flight, the bird appeared nearly uniform pale gray except for darker primaries and a pale rump. Since the underparts appeared very white and unstreaked, I concluded that the bird was probably an adult in basic plumage.

On 29 September 1995 I was birding the same area when I noticed a larger shorebird with a small flock of Sanderlings. I watched the bird from 7:45-8:20 a.m. and identified it as a juvenile Red Knot. This bird was about half again as large as a



95-44

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Red Phalarope
Number: 1 first-basic
Location: Saylorville Res., Polk Co.
Habitat: large mudflat at north end of reservoir
Date: 19 September 1995
Time: 2:10-2:23 p.m.
Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014
Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird(s): Soon after I arrived at Jester Park, I noticed a phalarope swimming along the edge of the mudflat near several Killdeer. The bird was nearly as large as the Killdeer, although it was clearly shorter-legged. In general, it was a pale, stocky, plump shorebird. The black bill was short, thick, and blunt-tipped and roughly equal to the length of the head. The head was white, except that the crown and back of the neck were black and there was a black spot around each eye. The underparts were entirely white. There was some very faint buffy color on the sides of the neck and shoulder. The mantle and scapulars were light gray with a couple of small black patches. In flight, the upperwings were dark with a clear white stripe extending along the bases of the flight feathers. The tail was dark. The short legs were black. Based on the mantle pattern and buffy color on the neck, I concluded the bird was in first-basic plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: The only similar species is Red-necked Phalarope, which was eliminated by bill size and shape, larger body size, and mantle pattern.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were very good with partly cloudy skies. Estimated viewing distance was 200m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: Very familiar with Red Phalaropes from pelagic work off the East Coast. Also extensive experience with the similar Red-necked Phalarope.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: written during observation

How long before this form completed: 19 September 1995