

Red Knot

2

Record Number: 90-27

3 Sep 1990

Classification: A-D

w of Huxley, Story Co., IA

S. Dinsmore, et al.

through 9/13; IBL 61:20, 62:21

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 3-11 Sep

Pam Allen, 3 Sep

Jim Dinsmore, 6 Sep

Mark Proescholdt, 8 Sep

Beth Proescholdt, 8 Sep

Tim Schantz, 13 Sep

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 61:20

Records Committee: IBL 62:21

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Good documents, viewed by many birders.

A-D: Good descriptions by multiple observers.

A-D: Good descriptions by all observers.

A-D: Excellent group of documentations eliminates any other species.

A-D: Many good documentations and descriptions of the Red Knots.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Red Knot

Number: 2 juv.

Date: 3-11 Sep 1990

Time: 5:20-6:48 p.m. on 3 Sep

Location: flooded field 1.2 mi. west of Huxley, Story Co.

Observer(s): Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames

Other observer(s): James J. Dinsmore

Description of bird(s): While I was scanning through about 100 mixed shorebirds in a flooded field, I noticed a single, large, gray and white shorebird feeding with several Killdeer. The bird was slightly larger than the Killdeer, and much chunkier. I quickly recognized the bird as a Red Knot, a species I am very familiar with. I watched the bird for about twenty minutes, when it was joined by a second knot in identical plumage. The two knots remained together until I left, and were seen together on all of my subsequent visits to the area.

Both birds were estimated to be 10-20% larger than nearby Killdeer. The mantle and wings were dark gray with prominent pale edges to the feathers. The wingtips were black, darker than the mantle. The breast and underparts were white with some faint light gray streaking on the breast and flanks. The tail was mostly white with a very muted gray band, about an inch wide, near the tip of the tail. In flight, both birds showed a very faint light stripe that extended along the base of the flight feathers from the body to near the wingtip. The legs were very dull yellow and fairly short. The head was gray with a darker cap and a light supercilium. The bill was dark, stout, of medium length, and slightly drooped downward near the tip. Neither bird was heard.

I last saw the knots on the morning of 11 Sep. I continued to look for them over the next few days (almost daily), but never saw them again. I heard rumors that one or more knots were seen on later dates, but I wonder about the validity of those reports.

Similar species and how eliminated: The fairly large size and gray and white plumage eliminates all shorebirds except Sanderling and winter-plumaged Dunlin. Sanderling is eliminated by smaller size and different bill shape. Winter-plumaged Dunlin is eliminated by different bill shape, slightly smaller size, and different tail pattern.

Optical equipment and viewing conditions: Viewing conditions were very good with the sun behind me or to one side. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 feet. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

Previous experience with species: I ma very familiar with Red Knots from Massachusetts, New Jersey, and I have seen them in Iowa in six of the last seven years. I am also familiar with Sanderlings and Dunlin.

How long before field notes written? written during initial observation

How long before this form completed? 2 days after last sighting

DOCUMENTATION FORM

SPECIES: **Red Knot** (*Calidris canutus*)

HOW MANY: Two (2)

LOCATION: One (1) mile West of Huxley, IA on county road E63, on South side of road

HABITAT: Flooded grain field

DATE: 3 September 1990

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 6:15 to 6:40 P.M., C.D.S.T.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Stephen J. Dinsmore (Ames, Iowa)

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street
West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen, address same as above

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: These were two medium-sized shorebirds in non-breeding plumage; chunky, heavy and rounded in appearance. They had short legs, short bill and gave the impression of being quite sedate in their movements. They fed by probing their bill in the shallow mud and would wander slowly into the grasses on the mud flat and then back out into view. The color of the plumage was greyish with a very, very slight brownish tinge. The feather edgings on the back were "scaly" looking or like white scallops around the edges. The underparts of the birds were white bellies with slight very faint streaking on breast. The bill was short and black. The legs appeared to be a dark greenish color.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: Black-bellied Plover in non-breeding plumage has much shorter and stouter bill. Sanderlings are smaller and do not have the "scaly" looking appearance on the back feathers. Curlew Sandpiper's bill would be longer and decurved.

VIEWING CONDITIONS AND EQUIPMENT: Viewing conditions were very good as the skies were clear. Viewed from a distance of 60-200 yds.

Viewed with Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope with 20-60 zoom lens and 8x36 Bushnell Custom binocular.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

WITH SPECIES: None

REFERENCES CONSULTED: FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, National Geographic Society, Second Edition, 1987. WESTERN BIRDS, Peterson Field Guide #2, Roger Tony Peterson, 1990. THE FACTS ON FIELD FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH ATLANTIC SHOREBIRDS, Richard J. Chandler, 1989. SHOREBIRDS, AN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE; Peter Hayman, John Marchant, and Tony Prater, 1986. THE AUDUBON SOCIETY MASTER GUIDE TO BIRDING, Vol. 1, Loons to Sandpipers; John Farrand, Jr., Editor, 1983.

HOW LONG BEFORE

FIELD NOTES MADE: As the birds were being observed.

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS

FORM COMPLETED: November 6, 1990

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Red knot

How Many? two

Location? flooded field between Huxley and Slater, Story County

Habitat? flooded field

Date? 6 September 1990

Time? 4:45-5:00 p.m.

Observers Name and address: Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames

Others who saw bird: Steve Dinsmore, others earlier

Description of bird:

medium sized shorebird, slightly larger than Killdeer and body size about that of Lesser Yellowlegs, both compared directly with bird in field

overall body color was light gray above, while underneath was white, some streaking on upper part of breast

little in way of distinguishing marks on birds other than distinct dark line through eye, white above the line

bill was medium length, basically straight but with a slight hint of a downcurve at the end, bill was black

legs were distinctly shorter than those of the yellowlegs which made it appear somewhat smaller bird, didn't see leg color

bird body shape was stocky so that the bird was fat looking

did not see birds fly so didn't see wing stripe or tail

Similar species and how eliminated: too big for Sanderling and also not nearly as light colored as that species, also no shoulder mark Pectoral superficially similar but body color was not the brown of pectoral, also did not have the breast markings of pectoral (which were present on the same pond)

Dunlin--bill not long enough for Dunlin, curve not as pronounced as Dunlin, and overall bill not heavy enough for Dunlin

Viewing conditions and equipment: bird was about 80 yards away but sun off to side and good viewing light (sky clear and full sun)

Previous experience with species: have seen this species in Iowa (twice previously), Illinois, Massachusetts (hundreds), and Florida; also familiar with Dunlins, Pectorals, and Sanderlings

References consulted: Robbins field guide

How long before field notes were made? conscientiously went through list of characters and made note of them in the field in anticipation of filling out documentation

How long before this form was completed? next day, about 18 hours after I saw the birds

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How long before this form was completed? next day, about 18 hours after I saw the birds

What species? Red Knot How many? 2Location? 1 mile west of Huxley in Story CountyType of habitat? two nice ponds beside the highwayWhen? date(s): Sept. 8, 1990 time: 6:10 p.m. to 6:50 p.m. (approximately)Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Beth Proescholdtothers before or after you: Steve Dinsmore, many others

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.

Two large, chunky gray shorebirds were at the water's edge on the shore. They had a large dark and thick bill. The actual body size (excluding legs) was almost the size of Greater Yellowlegs which were nearby, but the body size was chunkier. The Red Knots towered in size over Pectoral Sandpipers. They had dark-appearing legs, were white underneath, and were very grayish over their backs. They had a dark stripe-look through the eye. At least one had black edging on the wing to the tail tip. When feeding, they would jab away at an angle and not up and down. Their bills were shorter than the bill of a Stilt Sandpiper. One ^{Knot} was feeding in the water which ~~was~~ up to its legs once, they walked with a waddle.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Black-Bellied and L. Golden Plover have different postures and patterns and don't have the real grayish back. Dunlins would be much smaller. Stilt Sandpipers are slimmer and smaller.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Both sunny and cloudy at times with sun at our side. Distances were 40-50 yards away-estimated. 8X30 Binocs and 22X Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Excellent, close looks at one last year at Sandpiper Beach at Saylorville.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

R.T. Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds and Nefl. Geographic's Birds of N. America.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? Sept. 25, 1990

What species? Red Knot How many? 2Location? 1 1/2 miles west of Huxley, South Story CountyType of habitat? flooded field - 2 pondsWhen? date(s): September 8, 1990 time: 6:15^{PM} to 6:50^{PM}Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdtothers before or after you: Steve Dinsmore, Ann Johnson, et al

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.

At the far edge of the pond, 40-50 yards away, were two large dumpy, short-legged shorebirds. They had pale gray backs with a dark edge of the primaries showing, the wings extending to the end of tail. Underparts were white. The short, straight, black bill + short legs (too far to see the color) separated them from dowitchers, yellowlegs or Stilt Sandpiper. The body was about the length of a Greater Yellowlegs but much heavier. They were feeding at the edge of the water in a fast-jabbing motion, walking with almost a waddle. I didn't see them fly.

We knew these large shorebirds could be nothing but Red Knots in winter plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: Other large shorebirds: Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitchers, Stilt Sandpiper etc.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

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

Approximately 40-50 yards, sun from west, at our side as we faced south; Nikon 8x30 binoculars and Bushnell Spacemaster

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I had an unsatisfactory peek at one once.

References and persons consulted before writing description: description written as we watched birds, a while consulting guides to be sure we looked for all the marks,

How long before field notes made? while watching birds this form completed? Sept. 20

Rare Bird Report

Species- Red Knot (Calidris canutus)

Location- South of County Road E63, Story Co., Iowa

Observers- Tim Schantz, Jim Fuller

Date - 9/13/90

Equipment- Zeiss 10x40B, Kowa 20x Spotting Scope

Description- Large Caldris about the size of a Dowitcher. Light colored on the face and underparts with a faint eyeline and slight buff tinge on the breast. Bill was shorter than a Dowitcher. Gray upperparts with black edges to the feathers. Primaries were more uniform in color and darker gray. Legs were shorter than Dowitcher and yellowish in color.

Discussion- After hearing a report of two birds of this species at the above location I went to the area where I was joined by Jim Fuller. We saw a number of different shorebirds. We spotted one Red Knot with Dowitchers and Stilt Sandpipers. After studying the bird I felt confident that this species was identified correctly and that it was a juvenile. I have experience with this species having seen them and banded them off The West Coast of the United States.

Tim Schantz
309 E Robinson
Knoxville, Iowa 50138