

Red Knot

3 Sep 1989

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

S.Dinsmore, et. al.

through 9/6; IBL 60:14, 61:85

Record Number: 89-32

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore, 3 Sep

Jim Dinsmore, 3 Sep

Bob Myers, 3 Sep

Robert Cecil, 2 Sep [sic]

Ann Johnson, 4 Sep

Jim Fuller, 5 Sep

Michael K. Thomas, 5 Sep

Mark Proescholdt, 6 Sep

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:14

Records Committee: IBL 61:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Convincingly documented by multiple observers. Note: This bird was found by Dinsmore on Sept. 3. The Sept. 2 date on Cecil's documentation was in error.

A-D: Many good documentations for a good bird in Iowa.

A-D: The two birds well described-apparently a juvenile and an adult. The grayish coloration is distinctive on Red Knots (but by no means diagnostic).

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Red Knot

How Many?1

Location?Sandpiper Beach area of Saylorville Res., Polk Co.

Habitat?sandy/rocky beach

Date?3 Sep 1989

Time?6:53-7:41 a.m. and 8:15-9:35 a.m.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames

Others who saw bird:Jim Dinsmore, Eugene & Eloise Armstrong, Dennis Thompson, Bob Cecil

Description of bird:I first noticed the bird because of its large size and gray and white plumage compared to nearby Killdeer. Throughout my observation of the bird, it actively foraged along the rockier sections of the beach in the company of Killdeer and Least and Western sandpipers.

The knot was almost identical in size to a Killdeer, except that it may have been a bit chunkier. The upperparts were medium gray with lighter tips to the scapulars, giving the bird a scaly appearance. The wings were darker than the upperparts, becoming black near the wingtips. In flight, the bird showed a prominent white stripe along the base of the flight feathers and a white rump. The underparts were whitish, with some blurry gray streaking on the breast and flanks. The streaking on the breast formed a faint bib, similar to the bib of a Pectoral Sandpiper. The legs were dull yellow. The head was mostly gray with a lighter eyeline. The bill was black, of medium length, and heavier at the base than the tip. In flight, the bird uttered a low "churk" several times.

Similar species and how eliminated:The large size should eliminate all peeps. The bird was also larger than Sanderlings in direct comparison. Otherwise, the bill shape and dull yellow legs would eliminate Sanderling and Dunlin.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sky mostly overcast. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 20 feet. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope and Bushnell 8x35 binoculars.

Previous experience with species:I have seen several other Red Knots in Iowa, as well as thousands along the East coast.

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

How long before field notes were made?written during initial observation of bird

How long before this form was completed?8 hours

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Red Knot

How Many? one

Location? Sandpiper Beach, Saylorville Reservoir

Habitat? mud flat along lake

Date? 3 September 1989

Time? about 8:45 a.m.

Observers Name and address: Jim Dinsmore

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA

Others who saw bird: Steve Dinsmore, Eloise and Eugene Armstrong,
Dennis Thompson, Bob Cecil

Description of bird: medium sized shorebird, directly compared with Pectoral Sandpiper; this bird was somewhat larger than the Pectoral. The general body color was light gray above and white below. The following characteristics were noted on the bird:

- a. In flight, had white wing stripe the length of the wing
- b. Bill was straight, dark colored, and was not especially long (i.e., not like Dunlin)
- c. Feathers on back grayish with fairly pronounced white tips to them, giving a somewhat scalloped appearance
- d. Distinct white line above the eye
- e. On side of neck there were at least several lines of dark-tipped feathers running down the neck but the belly itself was white (I didn't note if the dark lines were on the front of the neck too)
- f. Leg color not noted, legs not especially long or thin (i.e., it wasn't a yellowlegs)

Similar species and how eliminated:

Size eliminates peeps and other small sandpipers as well as really big sandpipers. Bill not long enough for dowitcher, snipe or Dunlin (also shape for latter). Lack of wingstripe eliminates Ruff, eyestripe eliminates Great Knot. Bill was not needle-like, eliminating Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope. Leg length eliminates Lesser Yellowlegs.

Viewing conditions and equipment: sky was mostly overcast and light poor but not really dark; I was less than 100 feet from bird and viewed it through 20 power spotting scope and with 6X binoculars. At that distance the bird was easily viewable and compared with Pectoral and Semipalmated sandpipers which were with it.

Previous experience with species: Have seen this species in Florida, Massachusetts, Iowa and Illinois. Saw birds in the latter two states in plumages basically the same as this one in 1984.

References consulted: None consulted until description written, then Natl. Geographic Guide consulted to compare with other species.

How long before field notes were made? This form typed up from memory

How long before this form was completed? 8 hours

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Red Knot How many? 1Location? Saylorville Res.Type of habitat? beachWhen? date(s): Sept. 3, 1989 time: 1:00pm to 1:15pmWho? your name and address: Bob Myers RR2, Box 153 Perry, Ia. 50220others with you: Betsy Myers - (wife)others before or after you: Steve Dinsmore - MOB

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.

This was a heavy bodied medium sized shorebird (killdeer size)
Overall color was grey with whitish belly. Bill was stout,
fairly long and black. White edgings on back feathers
indicated juv. birds.

I hope other documentors kept better notes and
were more prompt with the documentation than I on
this one.

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:

75' distance - 20 to 60x scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: have seen several

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? none this form completed? months - I forgot this one
completed 10-15-89

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-32

What species? Red knot How many? 1

Location? Sandpiper Beach at Sailorville Reservoir, Polk County, Iowa

Type of Habitat? Small mud flat near sandy beach

When? date(s): Sept. 2, 1989 Time: AM - forgot to note time: _____ to _____

Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil 1315 41st St. Des Moines, IA 50311

Others with you: Many observers

Others before or after you: 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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Someone pointed out the bird to me. It was almost exactly the same size as accompanying Killdeer. It had a relatively heavy bill the same length as the head. A whitish eyestripe extended from the bill to behind the eye. Bill was straight.

The upperparts (including back, most of wing, and crown) were a uniform gray, perhaps somewhere between a pale and medium gray for lack of better description.

The underparts and rump were whitish. The upper breast was more gray, similar to the back.

A white wingstripe was visible in flight.

Legs were dark.

Similar species; how eliminated: Size, gray back, eye stripe and bill description seem to rule out similar species.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? Nope
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
Looking into sun with 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: No relevant experience with Red Knot.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Checked NGS on way to Sandpiper.

How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? 1 week.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-32

Species: Red Knot- 1 juvenile; 1 adult basic plumage

Location: Sandpiper Beach, Saylorville Lake, Polk County, IA

Habitat: Sandy and muddy shoreline of man-made reservoir

Date(s): 9/4/89 and 9/6/89

Time: 11:48 am to 12:15 pm
11:15 am to 11:45 am

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Park ranger (whose name escapes me) on 9/4 and Mark Proescholdt on 9/6

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 behavior and voice.

This good-sized shorebird was immediately noticeable by its extremely pale appearance as compared with other shorebirds in the area. It was comparable in size to a nearby killdeer but was obviously a chunkier build which gave it a short, stocky look. The black bill was proportionately shorter than most sandpipers its size, but it was longer than a plover bill. It was stout at the base, tapering down to the tip and was fairly straight. The crown was gray and somewhat streaky while the nape was a muted solid gray. The back was gray with some black and white feather edging extending to the wing coverts which gave the upperparts an extremely scaly appearance. The face was mostly gray with an ill-defined white eyebrow. As I was looking primarily at the back and side, the underparts were hard to see. From the side I could see a bit of gray coming from below the throat down the side. The flank was white with no markings. The legs were dark. I watched this bird from about fifty feet for approximately two minutes. It then flew across the bay to a sandbar. In flight a narrow white wing stripe and grayish-white rump were visible. The bird did considerable moving around for the next ten minutes or so with short looks available from time to time. The washed out appearance made it relatively easy to locate, but lighting and distance made it difficult to see the finer features. I had been joined by one of the Corps of Engineers rangers when what I assumed to be the same bird settled onto the mud flat to our left about 100 feet away. The bird we observed at that time was very white underneath with very little gray wash on the breast. The white eyebrow was evident. We watched this bird for several minutes but it was not particularly active and primarily gave us head on looks. As I was scoping some other shorebirds, my companion asked if there were two knots. Surprisingly, a second knot was a few feet from the first and in fact both were seen in the same field of view of the scope at 25x. The washed out appearance, the large chunky shape, and the relatively short, black bill was evident on both birds. Lighting and position of birds precluded good looks at finer features. Both flew shortly thereafter.

On 6 September I had the opportunity to observe a red knot at approximately seventy-five feet. This time it was with a black-bellied plover, which looked huge in comparison and helped point out the distinctions in bill size and shape. This knot had a mostly gray back with white feather edgings. It did not have the darker bands on the back and wing coverts. The breast was washed with a very pale gray and the legs were lighter than the one I'd seen a couple days before - more of a yellowish-green. The white eyebrow was more distinct than the one studied on 4 September. I believe that the bird first studied was a juvenile, as evidenced by the distinct dark/white feather edgings on the back, and that the other was a basic plumaged adult by the nearly white underparts, the existence of only white feather edgings on the upperparts, and the distinct eyebrow.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Bill length and shape eliminated plovers, although the birds had somewhat the same coloration as a black-bellied plover. There was also a resemblance to juvenile/winter plumaged sanderlings, but the birds were much larger than some nearby sanderlings. Curlew sandpiper was eliminated by bill shape and dowitchers and other larger sandpipers were eliminated by the combination of leg color, bill length and chunky body combinations.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Sunny to partly cloudy with the sun overhead and to the left. Good lighting at times but not optimal at others. Bird(s) were at an estimated thirty feet to 75 yards at various times. Viewed through 7x26 binocs and scope at 25x-45x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Very little with knots but many years with various other shorebirds.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None prior to field notes; National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America consulted prior to completion of this form.

How long before field notes made? immediately after observation How long before this form completed? Most was written two hours after the first observation. Revised and completed eight hours after the final observation.

What species? RED KNOT How many? 2 (1 ADULT 1 JUVENILE)

Location? SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR 89-32

Type of habitat? SAND BEACH

When? date(s): 5 SEPT. 1989 time: 6:42 AM to 7:05 AM

Who? your name and address: TIM FULLER, 6 HONOLUIAN KNOLL, RR#4, IOWA CITY, IA, 52242

others with you: _____

others before or after you: MOB.

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.

THERE WERE TWO BIRDS, BOTH THE SAME SIZE AND LARGER THAN THE PECTORAL SANDPIPER AND MUCH LARGER THAN THE PEEPS IN THE AREA. ABOUT THE SAME LENGTH AS THE KILLDEER, BUT MUCH PLUMPER. ALSO LARGER THAN RUDDY TURNSTONE AND SANDERLINGS. BOTH BIRDS WERE A RATHER DULL GRAY AND WHITE AND "PLUMP". THE BIRDS WERE ONLY SEEN STANDING AND WALKING. BOTH BIRDS HAD A BLACK BILL WHICH WAS ABOUT THE ~~LENGTH~~ ^{WIDTH} OF THE HEAD IN LENGTH, OR JUST SLIGHTLY LONGER. LEGS WERE A DULL YELLOW-GREEN. BELLY WHITE WITH GRAY STREAKING AND NECK HAD INDISTINCT STREAKING. PRIMARIES WERE QUITE DARK ON FOLDED WING AND ABOUT THE SAME LENGTH AS THE TAIL. HEAD WAS GRAY ON TOP WITH A LIGHT EYE LINE. EYE WAS DARK - NO EYE RING NOTED. BILL WAS STRAIGHT WITH EVER SO SLIGHT DROOP ON END (ADULT BIRD ONLY). THE BIG DIFFERENCE WAS THE SCAPULARS AND COVERTS - ONE OF THE BIRDS (ADULT) WAS A PLAIN DULL GRAY WHILE THE OTHER (JUVENILE) HAD DISTINCT WHITE FEATHER EDGINGS IN THOSE AREAS, AND THUS A VERY SCALED APPEARANCE.

Similar species and how eliminated: STILT SANDPIPER - HAS LONGER LEGS + A MUCH LONGER BILL. DUNLIN HAS DARK LEGS AND OBVIOUS DOWNTURNED BILL

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: EARLY MORNING - SUNNY - LIGHT AT BACK - LOOKING WEST. KOWA TSN-4 AT 30-40 YARDS.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: SEEN SEVERAL TIMES IN IOWA AND EAST COAST.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NATG GEOGRAPHIC GUIDE

How long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 14 HOURS

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

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Red Knot How many? 1
 Location? Sandpiper Beach - Saylorville - Polk Co.
 Type of habitat? Sandy beach
 When? date(s): Sept. 6, 1989 time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Ia. 50148
 others with you: Ann Johnson
 others before or after you: Steve Dinsmore, many others before

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.

This large shorebird had a very gray back and a black, stout bill. It towered in size comparison over a Sanderling beside it. The Red Knot had a white eyeline over the eye and greenish-yellowish legs. It had cream-white undersides and white markings on its gray back from pale white feather edgings. On its throat were gray markings like a necklace and almost like a Pectoral Sandpiper's bib. A boat flushed it once and it showed a wing stripe in flight and a whitish rump tinged with gray. Other shorebirds were present to give size comparison. It was quite a bit smaller-looking than a Black-Bellied Plover with it, larger than a Pectoral, and about the same size as a Killdeer.

Similar species and how eliminated:

A Sanderling is much smaller with different color patterns.
 A Black-Bellied Plover has different shape, different leg color, and different back pattern.

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 with sun at my side and behind me. Had good visibility
 Distances estimated → 80 yards, 50 yards, 25 yards, 8x30 Binocs, 22x Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen 1 Basic-Plumaged Red Knot before.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

R.T. Petersen's Field Guide to the Birds.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? NOV. 12, 1989

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

What species? Red Knot How many? 1
 Location? Saylorville Reservoir - Sandpiper Beach
 Type of Habitat? Beach area mixed sand/rocks with some muddy areas
 When? date(s): Sept 5, 1989 time: 4:35 pm to 5:15 pm
 Who? your name and address: Michael K. Thomas, 410 56th Street, Des Moines, 50312
 Others with you: none
 Others (before) or after you: Steve Dinmore, Ann Johnson

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

The bird was observed undisturbed for c. 20 minutes--mostly at
 about 100 feet

Similar species; how eliminated:

Bill too long for Black-bellied & other Plovers
 Bill straight - not curved like Curlew Sandpiper
 Bill too short for Dowitchers
 Body too chunky for most sandpipers.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? N/A
 If yes, explain:

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

Used 8x40 binoculars and ~~80mm~~ 80mm scope @ 22x. Distances ranged from 100 yards down to 75 feet. Cloudy but plenty of light: good viewing conditions.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
none - life bird

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Field Guide to Birds, Audubon Field Guide to N. American Birds used when viewing.
 How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? same evening

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-32

What species? Red Knot How many? 1
 Location? Saylorville Reservoir - Sandpiper Beach
 Type of Habitat? Beach area mixed sand/rocks with some muddy areas
 When? date(s): Sept 5, 1989 time: 4:35 pm to 5:15 pm
 Who? your name and address: Michael K. Thomas, 410 56th Street, Des Moines, 50312
 Others with you: none
 Others (before) or after you: Steve Dinmore, Ann Johnson

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

The bird was observed undisturbed for c. 20 minutes--mostly at about 100 feet through a scope. No vocalizations were discernible. The bird was feeding at the waters edge in and around other shorebirds (4-5 Kildeer, 5-6 Least Sandpipers, 1 Ruddy Turnstone, 1 Sanderling, 1 American Avocet) and numerous Ring-billed Gulls and Caspian Terns.

The bird was a little longer than the Ruddy Turnstone and about the same length as the Kildeer. It was however, noticeable thicker bodied than the Kildeer and had shorter legs than the Kildeer. My estimate is that it was about 10 inches in length. Body height appeared to be greater than the leg length.

The legs, eyes and bill were black. The bill was straight, slightly tapered and was the same length or a little longer than the head length. There was an uneven whitish eyebrow with light brownish areas before and after the eye.

The crown, nape, back and upperwings were a pale brown to a light gray-brown with irregular lighter markings. The chin and throat were off-white with some light specklings of light brown. The top 1/3 to 1/2 of the breast was speckled a pale brown-light gray-brown. The lower portion of the breast and the belly was whitish. The rump was a light grayish color.

A slight whitish-buffy wing stripe was visible on the upper wing when the bird flew away. At rest, the wings and tail extended the same length (? c. 1 to 1 1/2 inches).

is per. cloudy over plenty of water. good viewing conditions.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
none - life bird

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Field Guide to Birds, Audubon Field Guide to N. American Birds used when viewing.

How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? same evening

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