

Red Knot

5 Aug 1986

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

**S. Dinsmore, *Myers

also 6 Aug (3 birds total); IBL 57:16, 77, Dinsmore 1987

Record Number: 86-10

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore, 5-6 Aug (two documentations)

Robert K. Myers

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 57:16

Dinsmore, S. 1987. Red Knot at Saylorville Reservoir. IBL 57:24.

Records Committee: IBL 57:77

VOTE: 1-II, 6-III

II, (1 bird--Dinsmore) Size, shape, bill shape combined with all reddish underparts is conclusive. (2 birds) Dinsmore's description is limited to "similar to 2 seen nearby same day." This is not sufficient. Myers, however, gives a good description of birds which is conclusive. Sounds like a total of three birds were present.

III, Good description from both observers, eliminates other possibilities convincingly enough for me.

III, Size, shape and coloration of birds documented would seem to leave no other choices.

III, red coloration helps.

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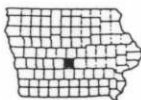
I did have several problems with the reports. The species accounts demonstrate how many early and late dates there were this season. Please be aware that a relatively common bird that occurs outside its normal time interval is a rare bird, and should be treated as such. Any bird that is way out of season should be fully documented, or it will not be entered into the record. Common birds that are reported among the three earliest or latest dates should be reported with some supporting evidence of identification. This need not be a full documentation, but it should be a brief description of the key field marks seen and heard. If an unusual sighting is presented without some evidence, the compiler cannot tell whether or not the observer made an error in entering the sighting (e.g., an incorrect date, or listing under the wrong species). If evidence is given, the compiler knows the observer was aware of the unusual nature of the record and probably took extra care in the identification.

Contributors should be clear about how many birds were seen on a given date. The best way to handle this is to state the number and date for the first, peak number, and the last seen. A report such as "2 to 10 were seen from 2 to 20 Oct" is difficult to cite. It is much better to say, "First: 4 on 3 Oct; peak: 10 on 15 Oct; last: 1 on 20 Oct." The latter data can be used.

For several years I have assisted Tom Kent with Field Reports. This time I thank him for helping compile part of the data and for writing part of the report. Suggestions for improving reports and corrections of factual information are welcome.

RED KNOT AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEVE DINSMORE

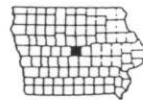


At 7:30 a.m. on 5 August 1986, while scanning the beach of the Oak Grove Recreation Area at Saylorville Reservoir, I noticed two medium-sized reddish sandpipers that were with several gulls and terns. At first I thought they were Sanderlings, but a closer view revealed that they were Red Knots. I watched the birds until 8:00 a.m. and noted the following marks. The birds were roughly the size of Killdeer, although they were shorter-legged and stockier. The throat, breast, and sides were reddish-brown. The lower belly and undertail coverts were white. The back was brown. The legs were short and yellow-green. The bill was dark, about as long as the head, and tapered to the tip. In flight, both birds showed a white rump and a white wing stripe that crossed the secondaries. These birds could not be relocated later in the morning; however, later that afternoon, Bob Myers and I found a single Red Knot at the Cherry Glen Recreation Area, about three-fourths of a mile south of Oak Grove. The bird was on a sand spit with a small flock of Sanderlings and peeps. It was similar to the birds at Oak Grove, except that there were patchy white areas on the breast, suggesting that the bird was an adult molting into basic plumage. The knot at Cherry Glen was still present early the next morning, but not later. Based on plumage differences, I believe that there were three birds. These records represent the sixth and seventh sightings of Red Knots in Iowa, with five of the records from the last three years. These are also only the second and third records of alternate-plumaged Red Knot in Iowa.

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

MOUNTAIN PLOVER IN STORY COUNTY

HANK ZALETEL



Heavy rains fell in eastern Story County from 6 to 10 July 1986. The pre-dawn thunderstorms, fueled by southerly winds, filled the Colo Ponds, a favorite location for shorebirds (Zaletel, H. 1984. Finding water birds in eastern Story County. *Iowa Bird Life* 54:27-29). On the evening of 9 July, I left Colo at 6:30 p.m. on old highway 30 (E-41) and drove to the main ponds. The usual shorebird habitat was under water, so I continued east to the next road and turned north. After viewing several common shorebirds at the corner, I proceeded north for one-half mile to a recently ploughed field on the east side of the road where a small pond had formed due to poor drainage. On the north slope I spotted a bird that resembled a Lesser Golden-Plover, but it didn't look quite right. It had an unmarked back, similar in color to a Killdeer. Its throat, forehead, and eyebrow were white and unstreaked. Its eyes, lores, bill, and cap were black. The unstreaked breast was light, creamy-brown, while belly and vent were white. After viewing the bird for 25 minutes and comparing it with Killdeer and with Lesser Golden-Plover in breeding and non-breeding plumages, I concluded that it was a Mountain Plover. I returned home and called Jim Dinsmore and Mark Prescholdt. I met them back at the site, and they agreed with the identification.

That evening I notified a number of birders, many of whom assembled early the next morning. It was seen at about 7:45 a.m. for about one-half hour and remained all day. Additional features noted in the documentations from these observers included a thin, white wing stripe, white wing lining and axillars (seen by Bob Myers when the bird raised its wings), dark edge to the folded wing, dark tip to the tail, light-brown band across breast, and size larger than Killdeer and smaller than Lesser Golden-Plover. Observers emphasized the lack of markings on upperparts and underparts. The bird would disappear for up to one-half hour. Under constant observation, it was found to lie down and be perfectly camouflaged. It preferred wet waterways that led to the pond.

Tom Kent searched *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* and bird books from various states and could find only two other records of Mountain Plover from the Midwest east of the Great Plains states: at Walton, Michigan, on 13 May 1976 (*American Birds* 30:845) and at Credit Island, Iowa, on 25 March 1964 (*Iowa Bird Life* 34:49).

715 West St., Colo, IA 50056



Black Scoters, Diamond Lake, 31 Oct 1986. Photo by Edwin Miller.

86-10

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: *Red knot*DATE SEEN: *8-5-36*SITE OF OBSERVATION: *Saylorville Res.*OBSERVERS: *S. Dinsmore, Myers*DATE OF REVIEW: *4-3-37*METHOD OF REVIEW: *Vote via mail*CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: *III*

COMMENTS:

The committee felt the descriptions as given eliminated any other possibilities.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Red Knot

How Many?2

Location?Oak Grove Beach, Saylorville Reservoir

Habitat?sandy beach along lake

Date?5 Aug 1986

Time?7:31-7:57 A.M. and 8:17-8:26 A.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:none

Description of bird:While scanning a group of gulls and terns at the beach, I noticed two reddish sandpipers on the shore. The birds appeared to be Killdeer-sized, though they were shorter-legged and stockier. The head, throat, breast, and belly were all reddish. The legs were short and of medium color. The bill was dark, about as long as the head, and tapered towards the tip. The back was brown. The undertail coverts were white. In flight, both birds showed a white rump and a white wing stripe crossing the secondaries.

Similar species and how eliminated:Only two other sandpipers have reddish underparts-Curlew Sandpiper and Sanderling. Bill shape eliminates Curlew Sandpiper. The larger size, extent of reddish underparts, leg color, white rump, and wing stripe confined to the secondaries eliminates Sanderling.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were o.k.-sky totally overcast with a light drizzle. Estimated viewing distance was 20 yards at the closest. I used a Bausch and Lomb 20x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen hundreds of Red Knots in Massachusetts plus singles in Iowa in 1984 and 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?on spot

How long before this form was completed?4 hours

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Red Knot

How Many?1

Location?Cherry Glen Recreation Area, Saylorville Reservoir

Habitat?mudflat along lake

Date?5-6 Aug 1986

Time?5:25-5:30 P.M. and 8:21-8:35 A.M.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Bob Myers, Perry

Description of bird:This bird was similar to the two birds seen nearby earlier that morning, except that the reddish underparts were covered by irregular patchy white areas. Because of this, I believe that this was a third Red Knot molting from alternate to basic plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated:See other documentation.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions fair-sky partly cloudy with sun to one side(on 8/5) and behind me(on 8/6). Estimated viewing distance was 75 yards(on 8/5) and 30 yards(on 8/6). I used a Bausch and Lomb 20x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen hundreds of Red Knots in Massachusetts plus singles in Iowa in 1984 and 1985.

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

How long before field notes were made?on spot

How long before this form was completed?12 hours

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

86-10

1. Species Red Knot 2. Number 1

3. Location Saylorville Res. - Polk Co.

4. Date: Aug. 5, 1986 5. Time Bird Seen: 5:20 p.m. to 5:30 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 fairly large (killdeer size) chunky sandpiper and had what I would call ^{short to} med.-length legs. Breast seemed quite robust. This bird apparently was just starting to molt to basic but still was very rusty (light reddish) from face down thru neck ^{unrestrictedly} and breast. The very center of breast had a grayish spot which may be the start of molt. The reddish was some darker than buff-breasted sandpiper (which I've seen ³ of this fall). Back was brownish with some apparent feather edging. Bill was dark, ~~st~~ stout (somewhat like sanderling) and about the length of the head.

7. Description of voice, if heard: —

8. Description of behavior: walking in the wet sand

9. Habitat - general: large man-made lake

specific: long point of land sticking out into lake

(Cherry Glen Access)

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

Bird was not marked right and had too short bill for a dowitcher and was too large and reddish for a buff-breasted sandpiper.

11. Distance (how measured)?

75-100 yd. ??

12. Optical equipment:

20X scope

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

Fairly good light. Bird was south of us - sun was to west.

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

I saw one last year but bird was in basic plumage. - shape was same, however.

15. Other observers: Steve Dinsmore -

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: None that I know of.

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

Did not need any.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 2 days

Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: RR-2, Box 153

Date: Aug. 7, 1986 City, State: Perry, Iowa 50220