

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/24/00

Ruff

Record Number: 98-25

23 Oct 1998

Classification: A-D

Runnells W.A., Marion Co., IA

Stephen J. Dinsmore

IBL 69:35, S. Dinsmore 1999

DOCUMENTATION

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 612 1/2 West Magnolia St., Fort Collins,
CO 80521 [2/28/99]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 69:35

Records Committee: IBL 69:89

Dinsmore, S. J. 1999. Ruff at Runnells Wildlife Area. Iowa
Bird Life 69:106.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Excellent description of a record late male Ruff.

A-D, For future reference, I'd like to see this bird as also
being recorded in Warren County.

A-D, Detailed description.

was seeing all along the wing. At a distance of about 40 meters I saw that the bill was red. As the duck came nearer, I noticed that the feet and legs were also light reddish in color and that the feet extended past the tail. The bird continued to fly toward me and passed over the road just south of me at a distance of 15 meters. As it passed over me I noticed that the chest was tan or brown colored and the belly was black. I knew then that it was a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. The bird was not relocated until 3 May, but from then until late May, many others saw the bird.

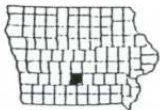
The normal range for this species is from northern South America through Central America and into southeastern Arizona and southern Texas. This year a number of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were reported in the Midwest, with at least three in Wisconsin and one in Kansas. This is the sixth report for Iowa, the third in spring.

2344 Saturn Circle, Las Cruces, NM 88012

RUFF AT RUNNELLS WILDLIFE AREA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 23 October 1998, I arrived at the south overlook of the Runnells Wildlife Area at about 7:30 a.m. A wide variety of waterfowl and shorebirds were present, and I was carefully scanning the area and counting birds. At 8:26 a.m., I saw three shorebirds on one of the closer mudflats. The birds were directly north of the overlook and thus were in Marion County. Two of the birds were Dunlin. The third bird was larger and had very distinctive buffy coloration. After noting the large size, buffy underparts, and general shape, I realized I was looking at a Ruff. The bird remained on the near mudflats until approximately 9:00 a.m. The bird was initially preening, but later fed with a small flock of Dunlin and Least Sandpipers. It was slightly larger and plumper than a nearby Lesser Yellowlegs. The shape of the bird reminded me of a long-legged Pectoral Sandpiper while the plumage was reminiscent of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. The body was very plump, accentuated by the small head and longer neck. I noted the small-headed appearance, similar to that of an Upland Sandpiper. The head and neck were warm buff with a slightly darker crown. The bill was black, of medium length, and very slightly drooped at the tip. The breast and belly were also buffy, fading to a white vent. The upperparts were darker brown and prominently marked with buffy feather edgings. The buffy feather edgings were most obvious on the mantle, scapulars, and secondary coverts. The legs were fairly long (about the same length as the legs of a Lesser Yellowlegs) and bright yellow. At 9:30 a.m., the bird flew to the northwest, eventually landing on a pond closer to Highway 316 and clearly in Warren County. In flight, I noted that the bird had a white rump with a dark central stripe and white underwings. The white color on the rump didn't look U-shaped like it is depicted in some field guides. I also noted a faint white stripe along the base of the secondaries. On the basis of the large size, buffy underparts, and buffy feather edgings I concluded the bird was a juvenile male.



This is the ninth record of a Ruff in Iowa. The records are about evenly split between spring and fall with sightings from March (1), April (1), May (3), August (1), September (2), and October (1). This record is unusual because of the lateness, although October 1998 was unusually mild in Iowa and many other birds lingered later than normal.

612 1/2 West Magnolia St., Fort Collins, CO 80521

COMMON NIGHTHAWK DRAWS A CROWD

THOMAS H. KENT

August 30, 1999, brought a cool front overnight and lots of warblers. At 7:45 a.m. I was in the creek's bottomland north of the flood control dam at Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City. A family of Black-capped Chickadees were calling, and as they moved into a large dead tree ahead of me their calls turned to angry scolding. All of a sudden the tree was full of warblers and other passerines recruited by the chickadees. As I scrambled to identify all of the warblers, I noticed a Common Nighthawk sleeping on one of the dead tree's limbs. The warblers were dive bombing it, and many of the other birds were scolding. I twice did a rough count of the birds in the tree and came up with 40. Warblers included Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Black-and-White, and American Redstart. Other species were Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Cardinal, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The frenzy of birds lasted for about 10 minutes. An hour later, the nighthawk was still sleeping, but no other birds were in sight.



I have seen nighthawks in the park before, but I have never known them to upset other birds. Sharp-shinned Hawks frequent the park, but flocks of passerines usually become quiet and disperse when they are around. Perhaps the chickadees mistook the nighthawk for an owl. Has anyone seen 18 species of birds in one tree at one sitting in Iowa before?

211 Richards Street, Iowa City, IA 52246

I.O.U. BUSINESS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Marshalltown, 28 March 1999, 1:12-5:00 p.m.

Mark Proescholdt: Presiding

Present: Jane Clark, Jim Dinsmore, Dan Dorrance, Rita Goranson, Maridel Jackson, Ann Johnson, Curt Nelson, Mark Proescholdt, Jim Scheib, Hank Zaletel

The Board approved allowing Jim Dinsmore to put an insert in *Iowa Bird Life* for selling updates of *Birds in Iowa* and special offers for that book.

IOU Editor: Jim Dinsmore discussed in detail the duties of Editor of *Iowa Bird Life* and the amount of time involved in that job to give the Board a better idea of what that job involves as they search for a new editor.

Newsletter: Hank Zaletel discussed the IOU Newsletter briefly. He and Linda are in their 15th year as Editors of the newsletter. Hank talked about the Middle School curriculum package, which is completed and available for \$10. One hundred packages have already been sold.

REAP Grant: The Board approved spending \$1,500 on a REAP Grant proposal to help fund 15 trunks of the Middle School projects to each Area Education Agency in Iowa as well as one trunk for the non-game DNR office at Boone.

IOU Display: Hank mentioned that Linda Zaletel had information and proposals for a new IOU display.

The Board voted to have Linda purchase this display at around \$270. This is a smaller display that can be shipped by UPS if needed for groups to use.

Upcoming Meetings: The Board approved accepting the proposal to meet in Ottumwa on 9-12 September 1999.

98-25

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Ruff

Number: 1 juvenile male

Location: Runnells Wildlife Area, Marion/Warren Co.'s, IA

Habitat: large mudflat area with shallow pools

Date: 23 October 1998

Time: 8:26-9:50 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird(s): none

Description of bird(s): I arrived at the Runnells overlook at around 7:30 a.m. A wide variety of waterfowl and shorebirds were present, and I was carefully scanning the area and counting birds. At 8:26 a.m., I located three shorebirds on one of the closer mudflats. One of the birds immediately caught my eye because of the buffy underparts. My first thought was that the bird was a Pectoral Sandpiper, but then I realized it was quite a bit larger than the other two shorebirds it was with, both of which were Dunlin. After noting the large size, buffy underparts, and general shape, I realized I was looking at a Ruff. The bird remained on the near mudflats for about half an hour. The bird was initially preening, but later fed with a small flock of Dunlin and Least Sandpipers. The bird was slightly larger and plumper than a nearby Lesser Yellowlegs. The shape of the bird reminded me of a long-legged Pectoral Sandpiper while the plumage was reminiscent of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. The body was very plump, accentuated by the small head and longer neck. I noted the small-headed appearance, similar to that of an Upland Sandpiper. The head and neck were warm buff with a slightly darker crown. The bill was black, of medium length, and very slightly drooped at the tip. The breast and belly were also buffy, fading to a white vent. The upperparts were darker brown and prominently marked with buffy feather edgings. The buffy feather edgings were most obvious on the mantle, scapulars, and secondary coverts. The legs were fairly long (about the same length as the legs of a Lesser Yellowlegs) and bright yellow. After half an hour, the bird took flight to the northwest, eventually landing on a pond closer to Highway 316 and clearly in Warren County. In flight, I noted that the rump was largely white with a dark central stripe (the white color didn't look U-shaped like shown in some field guides) and white underwings. I also noted a faint white stripe along the base of the secondaries.

On the basis of the large size, buffy underparts, and buffy feather edgings I aged the bird as a juvenile male.

Similar species and how eliminated: The combination of size, shape, and plumage was very distinct and eliminated all other shorebirds. The buffy plumage, bill shape, and tail pattern eliminated Lesser Yellowlegs. The larger size, longer legs, bill shape, and plumage eliminated Pectoral Sandpiper. The larger size, very buffy plumage, bill shape, and tail pattern eliminated Stilt Sandpiper.

Previous experience with species: I have seen this species in Massachusetts (1 adult Reeve) and North Carolina (2 Reeves, 1 juvenile male Ruff).

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with clear skies and the sun directly behind me. Estimated viewing distance was initially 300m, and never more than 750m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America
Hayman et al. Shorebirds: An identification guide

How long before field notes written? written during observation
How long before this form completed? written 26 October 1998