

Red Phalarope

Record Number: 96-51

13 Oct 1996

Classification: A-P

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

*J. Fuller, *S. Dinsmore, *C. Edwards

IBL 67:22, 81; P-0521

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller (13 Oct), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

Stephen J. Dinsmore (14 Oct), 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014

Chris Edwards (14 Oct), 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty 52317

PHOTOGRAPHS

Reid Allen (13 Oct) P-0521

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:22

Records Committee: IBL 67:81

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, The bill and extent of black on the head are sufficient for Red Phalarope.

A-P, Description by Edwards conclusive also.



Red Phalarope P-0521
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
13 Oct 1996 Reid Allen 96-57

Hed-necked Phalarope P-0522
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
11 Aug 1996 Reid Allen

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

96-51

SPECIES: Red Phalarope

LOCATION: Beach of Sandpiper Recreation Area, Saylorville Reservoir (Polk County)

DATE & TIME: 13 October, 1996 (5:48-6:10 PM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240

OTHERS: Reported by Jane Clark. Present while I was there were Eugene and Eloise Armstrong. MOB

BACKGROUND: Jane Clark had reported seeing a bird of this species at this location from 12 N to 2 PM on this date. I arrived there about 5:45 and found Eugene and Eloise Armstrong watching the bird. The bird was accompanied by a Killdeer, four Sanderlings, and a Semipalmated Sandpiper. Most of the time it waded in shallow water at the edge of the beach, but on two occasions all the shorebirds flew in a group around the beach, and relit.

DESCRIPTION: This bird was generally a black and white, thin shorebird of medium size. Compared to the Killdeer in the area, it was noticeably smaller. about 20-25%. It was roughly the same size as the four Sanderlings, but was thinner, and it was noticeably larger than the Semipalmated Sandpiper also present by 33%. Specifically, the head was contrasting black and white, with a white crown and sides of face, except where there was a thick, black area distal to the dark eye. The nape was also black. The black bill was relatively short and thick, about the same length as the width of the head. The bird had not completed its molt to basic plumage, as the back and folded wing had a wide gray area in the shape of a V and with the V pointing toward the tail. The rest of the upperparts were black with white feather edgings. There was a gray area that extended onto the upper breast at the bend of the wing. Otherwise, the underparts were white. The legs were dark. In flight, the upperwing did show a thin white streak, and there was a wide tail band with a lighter (but not white) rump.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Both the other phalaropes have long, needle-like bills. In addition, the Wilson's has a dark forehead, and the Red-necked is generally smaller.

OPTICS & VIEWING CONDITIONS: The day was sunny, but the sun was low in the west, and I was looking toward the northwest. I used Swift Audubon binoculars (8.5 X 44) and a KOWA TSN-4 telescope at 20X. Viewing distances were 40-60 feet.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen three other Red Phalaropes in Iowa, all in the fall.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: Field notes were written at the time of viewing and without reference to a field guide. I did look at the National Geographic guide later the same evening. This form was typed on 23 October.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Red Phalarope

Number: 1 first-basic

Location: Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co., IA

Habitat: sandy beach

Date: 14 October 1996

Time: 7:3807:50 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

Others who saw bird: Jane Clark, m.ob.

Description of bird(s): I arrived at the beach and within a couple of minutes located a phalarope swimming in a shallow pool near the beach. The bird was alone, so size was hard to judge. However, the bird appeared to be roughly the size of a Pectoral Sandpiper. The bird was a very stocky, short-necked shorebird. The bill was black, short, and blunt-tipped. The head and underparts were white, except for a darker crown, dark spot around the eye, and a brownish wash on the shoulder. The mantle, upperwings, and scapulars were pale gray with some small black marks, especially on the mantle. The legs were black and fairly short. I did not observe the bird in flight. The mantle pattern and brownish wash on the shoulder indicated the bird was in first-basic plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: Shape and behavior eliminated other shorebirds except for the phalaropes. Wilson's Phalarope had a longer, thinner bill and a longer neck. Red-necked Phalarope has a streaked back and a thinner bill.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were very good with mostly cloudy skies. Estimated viewing distance was 75m. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen several other Red Phalaropes in Iowa, plus thousands off the North Carolina coast.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none written

How long before this form completed: written 3 November 1996

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What Species? Red Phalarope**How many?** 1**Location?** Sandpiper Recreation Area, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.**Type of Habitat?** Shoreline with emergent vegetation; open water.**When?** October 14, 1996, 3:20 p.m., 3:40 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**Who?** Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317**Others with you:** Richard Tetrault (until 3:30 p.m.)**Others before or after you:** Jane Clark (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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.**

A small, plump, short-legged shorebird. Size similar to nearby Sanderlings. Bill entirely black, straight, thick, and short, approximately the same length as the width of the head. Eye dark. Forehead, face, throat, foreneck, side of neck, breast, belly, vent, and undertail white. Brownish-black mark from slightly in front of the eye to behind the eye and curving downwards to the ear coverts. Crown black with dark brown streaks. Hindneck black. The upperparts had patches of plain medium-gray and black, with no streaks, and I judged the feather groupings as follows: upper back black and gray; narrow center of back between folded wings black; scapulars plain medium-gray; coverts black with narrow light-brown edging; tertials and primaries black with very narrow whitish edging. Legs dull yellowish-brown. During flight, a white wing stripe was visible and several sharp, high-pitched calls were given. I judged the bird to be molting from juvenile to first basic plumage.

When I arrived at 3:20 p.m. the bird was swimming near the shore in a sheltered inlet along the beach, but almost immediately flew far out to open water and was lost from view. At 3:40 p.m. the bird returned to the same inlet and was observed swimming as well as walking slowly and resting in the vegetation on the shore. After ten minutes the bird flew several hundred yards out into open water and landed on the water, where it was visible until approximately 4:00 p.m.

Similar species; how eliminated: The thickness of the bill and the pattern of the feathers on the back eliminate Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes.**Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification?** No.**Viewing conditions:** Full sunlight from the side and slightly behind me; viewed 30 yards away with 8 x 40 binoculars and 15x-45x telescope.**Previous experience with species and similar ones:** No experience with Red Phalarope. Familiar with other phalaropes.**References and persons consulted before writing description:** National Geographic Field Guide, Shorebirds: an Identification Guide, after making notes.**How long before field notes made?** During observation.**How long before this form completed?** Three hours.