

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/20/00

Whimbrel

27 Aug 1995

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

*Stephen J. Dinsmore, *Jim Sinclair

IBL 66:20, 96;Sinclair & Dinsmore 1997

Record Number: 95-38

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014 [*3/24/96]

Jim Sinclair, 810 N. B St., Indianola [3/24/96]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:20

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Sinclair, J., and S. J. Dinsmore. 1997. A fall Whimbrel in Polk County. IBL 97:28-29.

VOTE: 7 A-D

and outermost tail feathers were white). The lack of a hood, lack of brown color on the body or wings, and broken tail band were used to age the bird as second-year. Grant (*Gulls: A Guide to Identification*, Buteo Books, 1986) indicates that most second-summer birds "acquire full hood as adult summer". This bird resembled a second-winter bird (especially the bird in photo 158 on p. 238 of Grant) because of the wing pattern and lack of a hood. Grant (1986) indicates that birds may acquire second-winter plumage as early as June and July. I believe the bird may have been molting from first-summer to second-winter plumage. This is about the twelfth record of a Laughing Gull in Iowa and continues the recent increase in records of this species in Iowa.

4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE AT RED ROCK RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 9 December 1995, I was scanning a large flock of Common Goldeneye off Whitebreast Point on the south side of Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County. I soon noted a different goldeneye which I thought to be a male Barrow's. I watched the bird intermittently from 11:35 a.m. to 1:10 p.m. Compared to nearby Common Goldeneyes, this bird had a jet black mantle, a thin dark mark extending forward from the shoulder, and a white facial spot that was shaped differently. The head mostly appeared black, but had a purplish sheen under some light conditions. The head shape was distinctive: a very steep, flat forehead, gradually sloping to the rear and creating a peaked-crown effect. The dark bill was shorter than the bill of a Common Goldeneye. The mantle and wings were jet black with a line of white spots on the scapulars extending forward to the shoulder. The bird had a long, slender, crescent-shaped white mark on the face, in front of the eye. This mark was not as crisp as I would have expected at this date, and I initially thought the bird was a first-fall male. However, consultation with Bellrose (*Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America*, Stackpole Books, 1976) revealed that this bird was certainly an adult male, probably at the very end of the molt to alternate plumage. All other plumage characters were those of an adult male. This is the sixth record of a Barrow's Goldeneye in Iowa.



4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

A FALL WHIMBREL IN POLK COUNTY

JIM SINCLAIR AND STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 27 August 1995, we were birding the islands at the north end of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. The exposed mudflats and short-grass habitat had attracted numerous shorebirds, including more than 40 Buff-breasted Sandpipers. At approximately 8:30 a.m., Sinclair saw a large shorebird alight in a shallow depression on one of the islands. Both of us focused on the bird and quickly identified it as a Whimbrel. The bird was crow-sized and brown overall with pale spots on the wings and mantle. The bill was twice the length of the head



and strongly decurved. However, the bill seemed shorter than that of most of the Whimbrels we had seen previously. The bill was mostly dark with a prominent area of pale pink color at the base, mostly restricted to the lower mandible. The head pattern was striking: pale central crown stripe, dark line through the eye, and a white line above the eye. The underparts were also mottled brown. After several minutes, the bird flew south and out of sight over the lake. In flight, we could see that the wings and wing linings were dark. When it flew, the bird gave a long series of single, loud, whistled notes which we immediately recognized as belonging to this species. Because of the shortness of the bill and the extensive pink color, we concluded the bird was a juvenile.

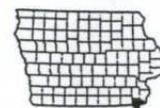
Whimbrels are rare migrants in Iowa. There are about 27 records of this species in Iowa, all but four of them from spring (22 April-27 May with a peak from 15-25 May). The only summer record is 1 on 26 June 1988 at Algona (*IBL* 58:109). Other fall records are of single birds: 14 September 1952 at Black Hawk Lake (Dinsmore et al. 1984), 1-2 August 1987 at Riverton Wildlife Area (*IBL* 58:19), and 3 September 1987 in northern Polk County (*IBL* 58:19). Although this species is clearly more likely to occur in spring, at least a few birds probably pass through Iowa in fall.

810 N. B St. Indianola, IA 50125 and 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN LEE COUNTY

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 18 December 1995 I saw an adult male Barrow's Goldeneye with a group of several thousand Common Goldeneyes on Pool 19 of the Mississippi River off Montrose, Lee County. I studied and photographed the bird from 9:20 to 10:30 a.m. at distances as close as 150 m. I was looking at a small group of Common Goldeneyes close to shore when I found a "different" male goldeneye which was easily recognizable as a male Barrow's. Compared to a male Common Goldeneye, this bird was darker-backed, had a smaller bill, a different head shape, and had black color extending forward from the shoulder. The bill was dark and was slightly shorter and slimmer at the base than the bill of a Common Goldeneye. The color of the head appeared mostly black, although in the right light there was an iridescent purple sheen. There was a small, white, comma-shaped spot on the face, in front of the eye and just above the base of the bill. This spot was smaller and of a different shape than that of a Common. The head profile was also different with a steeper forehead and a less-rounded head profile. The chest, flanks, and underside were white. The legs and feet were orange. The mantle and wings were mostly black, except for a distinct line of white spots on the scapulars that extended forward to the shoulder. A narrow black wedge extended forward from the shoulder, almost to the waterline. This is the seventh record of a Barrow's Goldeneye in Iowa. All of the records have been of males, with a possible female accompanying one of the males. By month, the records are from March (2-one remaining into April), November (2), and December (3-one remaining into January).



4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

95-38

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Whimbrel
Number: 1 juvenile
Location: Saylorville Res., Polk Co.
Habitat: large mudflat
Date: 27 August 1995
Time: 8:30-8:35 a.m.
Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014
Others who saw bird: Jim Sinclair

Description of bird(s): We were birding the large islands at the north end of the reservoir when we noticed a large shorebird standing on the mud nearby. The bird was much larger than any of the other shorebirds present, including a Greater Yellowlegs. The most obvious feature was the bill, which was long and decurved. The bill was mostly dark with a prominent area of pale pink color at the base, mostly restricted to the lower mandible. The bill was roughly twice the length of the head, although it was clearly shorter than the bill of an adult Whimbrel. The head pattern was striking: pale central crown stripe, dark line through the eye, white line above the eye. The remainder of the head and underparts were paler and mottled brown. The upperparts were also mottled brown, except the wings were slightly darker. After several minutes, the bird suddenly took flight and disappeared to the south over the lake. In flight, we could see that the wings and wing linings were dark. The bird also called in flight: a long series of single, loud, whistled notes which I immediately recognized as belonging to this species. Because of the shortness of the bill and the extensive pink color, we concluded the bird was a juvenile.

Similar species and how eliminated: The large size and bill shape eliminates all shorebirds except Long-billed Curlew. This species was eliminated by the head pattern and shorter bill.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with mostly clear skies. Estimated viewing distance was 75m, except <50m when bird flew by us. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: Have seen thousands in North Carolina, plus several in Iowa.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none made

How long before this form completed: 4 September 1995

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

95-38

What species? Whimbrel - juvenile How many? 1

Location? north end of Saylorville reservoir

Type of Habitat? exposed mudflats and short grass

When? date(s): 8/27/95 time: _____ to _____

Who? your name and address: Jim Sinclair, 810 N. B St, Indianola

Others with you: Steve Dinsmore

Others before or after you: _____

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.

Large shorebird with long decurved bill. Bill was approximately twice the length of the head. Overall color was brown on the mantle and wings with pale regular spotting. Head was pale with dark eye line and dark crown with narrow pale median stripe. Breast was faintly mottled brown on beige and belly was plain. Call was three identical notes.

Similar species: how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

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

Viewing conditions were good.
stationary viewing with 40x scope at 100 yd.
In flight with 10x42 binoculars as close as 40 yd.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen a number of Whimbrel on the east and gulf coasts.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 50 hours

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