

Curlew Sandpiper

13 May 1988

Coralville Res., Johnson Co., IA

\*Bendorf, \*Kent, \*Moore, \*P. Petersen

photos by Kent; IBL 58:81, 59:76, Bendorf and Kent 1988

Record Number: 88-05

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Carl J. Bendorf

Thomas H. Kent

Francis L. Moore

Jim Fuller

Peter C. Petersen

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, P-0252 (IBL 58:88)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 58:81

Records Committee: IBL 59:76

Photographs: IBL 58:88 (P-0252)

Bendorf, C. J., and T. H. Kent. 1988. Curlew Sandpiper at Coralville Reservoir. IBL 58:87-89.

VOTE: 4 A-P, 2 abstain

A-P. Documentations very good with photograph showing positive proof that this was indeed Iowa's second record of Curlew Sandpiper. Photograph somewhat on the dark side but shows diagnostic proof of Curlew Sandpiper.

A-P. Photo diagnostic.

SENT TO: Carl J. Bendorf 825 7th Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240; T. H. Kent 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246; Francis L. Moore 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703; Jim Fuller 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240; Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd. Davenport, IA 52803

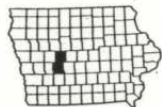
would be no need for a Field Reports Editor and because of your efforts my task is much easier. Most reports were neat, on time, in taxonomic order, and almost everyone provided documentations or details for sightings requiring them.

After putting a lot of work into field reports it is sometimes disheartening for the contributor not to see some sightings listed in *Iowa Bird Life*. These omitted sightings have not been overlooked, but because of size limitations and because of the incredible amount of information that is sent in, all sightings cannot possibly be listed. Editors must try to determine patterns, pick out early and late dates, observe peaks, and draw out other especially useful bits of information from a large group of sight records for each species. This is not always easy. A sight record may also be omitted if details of the observation or a documentation was required and not furnished. Also, because of deadlines, reports received late often cannot be incorporated. I try to list these late reporters along with other contributors, even though I have not used their information in my compilation, so they can at least get some credit for their efforts.

Contributors: keep up the good work!

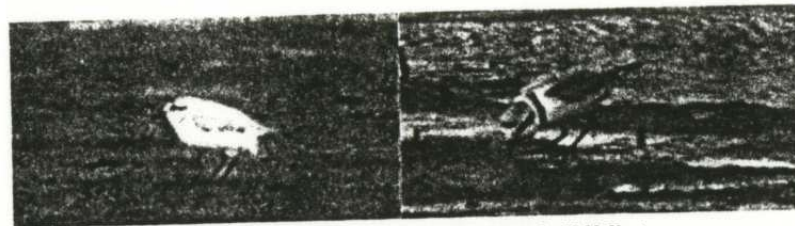
## SNOWY PLOVERS IN CENTRAL IOWA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE AND ANDREW S. FIX



Snowy Plover is an uncommon and local species that breeds along the Gulf Coast from Florida to Texas, along the West Coast north to Washington, and locally in the interior north to Kansas, Colorado, Utah, and Oregon (American Ornithologists' Union, 1983. *Check-list of North American Birds, 6th Edition*). Snowy Plovers are vagrants north and east of their range, with most records from April to July. In the last five years, there are records from British Columbia, Saskatchewan (4), Wyoming, Nebraska, Minnesota (2), Illinois (2), Ontario, and Pennsylvania. There are no previous records from Iowa.

At noon on 6 May 1988, Dinsmore noticed a very pale shorebird feeding with other shorebirds at Bays Branch in Guthrie County. The size, posture, and behavior were that of a plover, most likely a Piping Plover. At 1:34 p.m., after approaching closely and observing the bird for several minutes, he identified it as a Snowy Plover. The bird was about the same size and shape as nearby Semipalmated Plovers. The upperparts, including the back, wings, and tail, were pale brown, much paler than the nearby Semipalmated Plovers. The underparts and undertail were white. A black bar, about an inch long, angled forward and downward from each shoulder. The head was pale except for a black patch on the forehead and black auricular patches. The bill and legs were black. The bill seemed slightly longer and slimmer than the bill of a Semipalmated Plover. In flight, the bird had a light wing stripe and the rump was the same color as the rest of the upperparts. Several other birders saw the bird on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th, but it could not be located after that.



Snowy Plover, Bays Branch, 6 May 1988. Photos by T. H. Kent.

On 22 May 1988, Dinsmore and Fix were doing a Big Day Count in central Iowa. At 2:56 p.m., Fix noticed a pale shorebird feeding with other shorebirds in the southwest corner of Dunbar Slough in Greene County. He initially thought that it was a Piping Plover, but we quickly noticed the dark bill and legs and identified it as a Snowy Plover. We watched the bird until 3:14 p.m. During this time Fix photographed the bird. The bird was similar in appearance to the one at Bays Branch, although we noted that it appeared smaller and slimmer than nearby Semipalmated Plovers.

Dinsmore made an extensive search of the area the next morning. The number of shorebirds was greatly reduced, and the plover was not found. It was, however, reportedly seen briefly on the 25 May by Brian Blevins.

These sightings represent the first reports of Snowy Plover in Iowa. We thought that the birds were different individuals, but this cannot be proven with certainty.

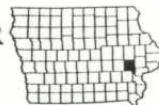


Snowy Plover, Dunbar Slough, 22 May 1988. Photo by Andrew S. Fix

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

## CURLEW SANDPIPER AT CORALVILLE RESERVOIR

CARL J. BENDORF AND THOMAS H. KENT



On 13 May, we were doing a Big Day Count with Francis Moore and Dick Tetrault. At 12:55 p.m. we arrived at an old backwater lake, known as Crescent or Half Moon Lake, which lies south of the DuPont Bridge at the west end of the Coralville Reservoir, Johnson County. From the back seat, Bendorf happened to look through the willow trees that ring the edge of water and saw a small duck sitting on a log. He yelled for the car to stop and put his binoculars a Green-winged Teal, a new species for the day. He also noticed a few shorebirds feeding in the grass just behind the teal. They were probing deeply and at least one seemed to have all red underparts. Bendorf mentioned that there seemed to be dowitchers to look at.

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Curlew Sandpiper, Coralville Reservoir,  
13 May 1988. Photos by T.H.Kent.

Stilt, Pectoral, and Curlew sandpipers.

Everyone climbed out of the car and Bendorf set his scope at the water's edge. He saw Pectoral and a few Stilt sandpipers, and one bird facing away that seemed mostly red underneath with white patchiness in the vent. He figured this might be a Short-billed Dowitcher. When the bird turned sideways, the first impression of body shape and bill was more like that of a Stilt Sandpiper. However, this bird actually seemed quite unfamiliar and he mentioned that it really looked like a Curlew Sandpiper. After this, Kent decided that he better take a look, and he agreed that this was indeed something unusual. As we studied the bird through scopes, Bendorf dictated the following notes:

This is a bird about the same size or perhaps slightly larger than a Pectoral Sandpiper. It is feeding, probing quite deeply in a very similar fashion to the pectorals, standing belly deep in the water and keeping its head down. The bill is longer than a pectoral in direct comparison and all black. It also has a nicely decurved bill over the entire length, not just the tip. The bill is rather thick at the base and narrows to a rather sharp tip. The sides of the head have a bit of a rufous wash. The top of the head and back of the neck is very finely streaked brown. The scapulars and wing coverts are very broadly edged with rufous and what looks like the median wing coverts are more edged with white. The greater wing covert area is whiter than the other coverts. The tertials are brown centered with rufous edging. The throat, breast and belly down to about even with the legs is a rich rusty color and this turns into patchy white in the vent area. It appears to have a rather distinct white supercilium.

Next we carefully walked around the edge of the water to the side the bird was on and approached within about 15 yards. Kent slowly walked even closer and took several photos. Several times the bird stopped feeding, briefly preened and raised its wings overhead for a moment. Bendorf recorded the following additional notes:

We have now moved around to the west side of the bird and we notice that this bird has very rich chestnut and white edging on the back feathers. It also has white at the base of the bill, mainly below and on the sides and not so much on top. When it's preening, you can see the white rump. The bird is smaller than a Stilt Sandpiper right next to it. The rufous underneath has white bars in it at the flanks. It also has a distinct white eye ring. Some of this eye ring is what made the supercilium seem more noticeable from a distance. It continues to feed quite actively. Several times when it lifted its wings briefly it has pure white underwings and axillars. The rufous color underneath is not quite as bright as a male robin, perhaps more like a female robin. The bird just poked at a Pectoral Sandpiper and chased it away.

We watched the bird until 1:30 pm. When we left, the bird was still there and we spent a half-hour getting to a phone in North Liberty to make some calls.

This was our first experience with this species. Moore was the only observer of Iowa's other Curlew Sandpiper, a similar appearing bird seen on 10 May 1985 at Nashua (*Iowa Bird Life* 55:72). Our identification seemed fairly

straightforward as Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Red Knot, and both dowitchers are all eliminated by the combination of evenly decurved bill, rufous underparts, and white rump. The description and illustrations in *Shorebirds* by Hayman, Marchant, and Prater suggest that this bird was a breeding plumage female. On the female, the face is less rufous, the supercilium is whiter, and the barring on the flanks is more distinct. The habitat description also fits, "Outside breeding season prefers muddy, poorly-vegetated wetland fringes, both inland and coastal..."

Curlew Sandpiper has a relatively localized breeding range on the tundra of northcentral Siberia. The only proven or suspected North American breeding records are from Barrow, Alaska, in 1962, 1972, 1973, and 1974. In contrast to the relatively narrow breeding range this species migrates across most of the world and winters from New Zealand and Australia to southern Asia to western and southern Africa. The spring and fall movement in North America suggests that it must also winter in South America in small numbers.

We found about 150 North American records of Curlew Sandpiper through 1986 in *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* and bird books of various states. The first record from Alaska in 1883 was followed by six more at various locations from 1936 to 1957. Over the last three decades the average number of North American records has dramatically increased from 1.5 to 5.9 to 8.9 per year. The widespread distribution over North America can be summarized as follows: East Coast (40%), West Coast (30%), central United States and Canada (23%), Gulf Coast (8%), and Alaska (7%). There is also one record from Hawaii. Two-thirds of the inland records are from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ontario. The rest are widely scattered from Pennsylvania to Alberta and Kansas to Manitoba.

By month, the records are distributed as follows: February (1%), March (1%), April (5%), May (20%), June (5%), July (22%), August (17%), September (11%), October (11%), November (3%), and December (1%). This pattern is similar to that of many North American shorebirds that breed on the tundra and winter in South America, with spring migration peak in May and adults migrating south in July-August and juveniles following in August-November. The weighting of sightings toward fall is consistent with longer migration time (more likely to be seen) and addition of juveniles to the population. The migration pattern of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, another Asian vagrant that has a breeding distribution similar to Curlew Sandpiper, presents an interesting contrast. Most Sharp-tailed Sandpipers winter in Australia, New Zealand, and nearby islands; most of the North American records are of juveniles in fall, with only a few apparently returning as adults in spring. From the number of spring sightings of Curlew Sandpiper it would appear that the Western Hemisphere is a regular, albeit small, part of the wintering range of this species.

825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240

58-05



## BIRD DOCUMENTATION FORM

CARL J. BENDORF  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY IA 52240

SPECIES: Curlew Sandpiper NUMBER: 1  
LOCATION: Hawkeye Wildlife Refuge COUNTY: Johnson  
DATE: 13 May 1988 TIME: 12:55 pm TO 1:35 pm

HABITAT: Edge of old oxbow pool; full of water with little mud around edge. 3.8 miles west of I-380 on F28, then 2.4 miles north on gravel.

DESCRIPTION: We were driving south along gravel road doing a Big Day. From the back seat, I happened to look through the small willow trees ringing edge of water and saw what appeared to be a small duck sitting on a log. I yelled for the car to stop and put my binoculars on the bird and saw it was a Green-winged Teal, a new species for the day. As the others looked at it, I noticed a few shorebirds feeding in the grass just behind the teal. They were probing deeply and at least one seemed to have all red underparts so I mentioned there seemed to be dowitchers to look at.

Everyone climbed out of the car and I set up my scope at the water's edge. I could see Pectorals, a few Stilt Sandpipers, and one bird facing away that seemed mostly red underneath with white patchiness in the vent. I figured this might be a Short-billed Dowitcher. When the bird turned sideways, the first impression of body shape and bill was more like that of a Stilt Sandpiper. However, this bird actually seemed quite unfamiliar and as my mind tried to fit the pieces together, I mentioned that what this really looked like was a Curlew Sandpiper. After I said this, Kent said he better take a look and after a few seconds he said that this was indeed something unusual. We studied the bird through my scope as Francis went back to the car for his Celestron scope. I went back and got my recorder and dictated the following while looking through the scope. The description below is a direct transcription from the tape, with only a few changes in the order. Notes in parentheses were added later during typing of form.

"This is a bird about the same size or perhaps slightly larger than a Pectoral Sandpiper. It is feeding, probing quite deeply in a very similar fashion to the Pectorals, (standing belly deep in the water and keeping its head down.) The bill is longer than a Pectoral in direct comparison and all black. It also has a nicely decurved bill the entire length, not just the tip. The bill is rather thick at the base and narrowing to a rather sharp tip. The sides of the head have a bit of a rufous wash. The top of the head and back of the neck is very finely streaked brown. The scapulars and wing coverts are very broadly edged with rufous and what looks like the median wing coverts are more edged with white. The greater wing covert area is whiter than the other coverts. The tertials are brown centered with rufous edging. The throat, breast and belly down to about even



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BENDORF

with the legs is a rich russet, rusty color and this turns into patchy white in the vent area. It (appears to have) a rather distinct white superciliary."

(At this point we carefully walked around the edge of the water so that we are now on the same side of the water's edge as the bird and we approach within about 15 yards, still viewing with the scope. Tom Kent slowly walked even closer and took several photos.)

(Several times the bird stopped feeding a briefly preened and also raised its wings overhead for a moment, like an Upland Sandpiper alighting.)

"We have now moved around to the west side of the bird and we notice that this bird has very rich chestnut and white edging on the back feathers. It also has a white at the base of the bill, (mainly below and on the sides and not so much on top.) When it's preening, you can see the white rump. The bird is smaller than a Stilt Sandpiper right next to it.

The rufous underneath has white bars in it at the flanks. It also has a (distinct) white eye ring. (Some of this eye ring is what made the superciliary seem more noticeable from a distance). It continues to feed quite actively. (Several times when it lifted its wings briefly) it has pure white underwings and axillaries. The rufous color underneath is not quite as bright as a male Robin, perhaps more like a female Robin. The bird just poked at a Pectoral Sandpiper and chased it away."

When we left, the bird was still there and we spent about 1/2 hour getting to a phone in North Liberty to make some calls.

SIMILAR SPECIES—COMMENTS: Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Red Knot, Dowitchers are all eliminated by combination of evenly decurved bill, rufous underparts, and white rump.

The description and illustrations in Shorebirds by Hayman, Marchant, and Prater, seem to suggest that this bird was a breeding plumage female. The face did not seem quite as bright rufous as the male and also the distinct white barring on the flanks and the whiter superciliary seem to fit the male illustration better. However, it is possible this was a male that was not quite into full breeding plumage at this date and still showed some hint of basic plumage.

The habitat description from Shorebirds is perfect for where we saw this bird: "Outside breeding season prefers muddy, poorly-vegetated wetland fringes, both inland and coastal..."

As I type this form, I realize that I never noted the leg color, but my general recollection is that they were dark.

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BENDORF

AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT OF OTHERS: Also present was Tom Kent and Dick Tetrault of Iowa City and Francis Moore of Waterloo. We all felt absolutely certain. Francis Moore had been discover of Iowa's first record about 3 years ago and on a date 3 days earlier. He said this bird looked much like that one.

LIGHT CONDITIONS: Perfectly clear day with a moderate breeze from south. At 1 pm, the sun was almost directly overhead and was a bit off to our left as we first looked at the bird and off to our right a bit after we walked around to looked from the other side.

DISTANCE: At first, about 30-40 yards. Later, as close as 15 yards. (Estimated)

EQUIPMENT: 22X spotting scope, Bushnell type and 10 X 40 Zeiss.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES: First encounter with this species. Familiar with Dunlin, Dowitchers, etc.

REFERENCES, PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION: Field notes dictated before consulting any guides. We had little discussion among ourselves before completing dictation.

FIELD NOTES MADE? Dictated during observation THIS FORM DONE? 2 days later.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? If yes, explain:  
Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance, how measured, camera equipment  
How long before field notes made? dictated during this form completed?  
References and persons consulted before writing description. Be detailed and list names of persons consulted. Do not list names of persons consulted after writing description.



## DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-05

What species? Curlew Sandpiper, alt plumage How many? 1Location? near DuPont Bridge, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson Co, IAType of Habitat? old backwater in reservoir flood plain, muddy edgeWhen? date(s): 13 May 1988 time: 12:50 to 1:30 p.m.Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52246Others with you: Carl Bendorf, Francis Moore, Dick Tetrault

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.

"The bird is slightly larger than a Pectoral. It has a bill longer than a Pectoral's, longer than the birds head, decurved, black. The bird is feeding downward into the mud. The top of the head is very plain looking. There is a slight supercilious line. The back is very finely feathered with white edging. The scapulars are broadly brushed with reddish edging and the lower scapulars (on long coverts!) have slight white edging. The underparts are dark reddish-brown, not near red, and extend down to the undertail coverts. The undertail coverts are white. The primaries and tail seem to be about the same length. It is a rather long slender bird, slimmer than a Pectoral Sandpiper. The wing coverts have white edging. The primaries appear to be dark. The upper surface of the tail is grayish." Later when preening and in flight the white rump and white underwing were seen. The distal tail appeared barred (faintly).

Similar species; how eliminated: The bird was also observed next to a Slight Sandpiper and it was smaller.

No other species has similar features.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no

If yes, explain:

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

Sun near zenith, 150 underparts mostly in shadow. 20x50px, 10x60mm lens.  
Walked to about 25 feet while taking photos with 400mm lens.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: life birdReferences and persons consulted before writing description: We discussed bird while viewing and looked at National Geographic Guide after taking notes.How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? 1 day

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



What species? CURLEW SANDPIPER How many? 1Location? CORALVILLE RESERVOIRType of habitat? SHALLOW WATER + MUDWhen? date(s): FRI. 13 MAY time: 4:05 + 4:13 to 4:10 + 4:15Who? your name and address: JIM FULLER

others with you: \_\_\_\_\_

others before or after you: SEVERAL - KENT, BENDORF, MOORE, SILLOCK

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.

WHEN I FIRST SPOTTED THE BIRD, SEVERAL FEATURES IMMEDIATELY PASSED THROUGH MY MIND. FIRST, THE VERY RICH RED BROWN COLOR, ESPECIALLY ON THE SIDE OF THE HEAD - IT ALMOST GLISTENED. SECOND, THE LONG (LONGER THAN HEAD WIDTH) BILL WHICH WAS DECURVED + POINTED AT THE END. THIRD, THE BIRD WAS QUITE A BIT SMALLER THAN I EXPECTED - CLOSE TO THE SIZE OF NEARBY PECTORAL SANDPIPERS + MUCH SMALLER 2/3-3/4 SIZE OF NEARBY DOWITCHERS. THE COLOR WAS MUCH BRIGHTER ALSO THAN THAT OF THE DOWITCHERS. BILL WAS DARK, AS WERE LEGS. A SUBTLE WHITE AREA WAS ~~SEEN~~ SEEN ON WING.

Similar species and how eliminated: DOWITCHER - SIZE - BILL SHAPE + LENGTHDid any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

9x36 BINOCULARS LOOKING SE WITH SUN IN WEST CLEAR SKIES16-48x SCOPE LOOKING SW - SUN IN WESTPrevious experience with species and similar ones: NONEReferences and persons consulted before writing description: WATL GEOG.How long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 5 HOURS

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



What species? Curlew Sandpiper How many? 1Location? 1/4 - 1/2 mi S. of Dupont Bridge, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Coralville Reservoir,Type of habitat? Shallow backwater near road with sparse emergent vegetation  
Johnson Co., IAWhen? date(s): May 13, 1988 time: 12:55 pm to 1:25 pmWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Carl Bendorf, Tom Kent, Richard Tetrault all from Iowa Cityothers ~~with you~~ after you: Jim Fuller, Iowa City

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 bird was feeding belly deep in the shallow water of a backwater area in the upper Coralville reservoir area. There was sparse emergent vegetation where the bird was feeding. Nearby Stilt sandpipers and Pectoral Sandpipers fed alongside this bird. It was the same size as the Pectoral's nearby. The head, breast and belly were mostly a rusty red color with a whitish base at the bill and a whitish supercilious line, reddish down to the vent area. The eye was black, the bill was black, long and decurved. The back was a brownish gray color with ~~rusty red~~ rusty red feather edging creating a checker board pattern on the back and tertials. The upper wing coverts were a brownish gray color with not as red feather edgings. The greater wing coverts had a whitish edging to them creating a white wing bar effect as the bird fed. The wing feathers, primaries, were a dark brown color. The tail was a medium to dark gray color. The inner wing linings were completely white as the bird stretched its wings full length. From the vent to the under tail coverts it was white with some reddish barring on the flanks. The upper tail coverts were white with some reddish + blackish barring in them. This particular bird was almost identical to the Curlew Sandpiper that I had seen and photographed at Nashua three years before.

Similar species and how eliminated: Red Knot not as dark red, Sanderling and Red Knot have straight bills. Dowitchers have long straight bills and are larger plumper more heavier bodied than this bird.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Sunny, excellent viewing conditions seen from different angles with sun directly on bird, from good viewing angle. Seen from approx. 60-80 feet at closest using 10x40 binoculars and 33x90 Celestron telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Documented + photographed one other Curlew Sandpiper at Nashua, IA 5/18. Lots of experience with Sanderling and Red Knot on E. Coast.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NoneHow long before field notes made? Time of sighting this form completed? 30 hours

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



DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-05

What species? Curlew Sandpiper How many? 1

Location? Louis Du Pont Bridge, Coralville Res., Dubuque

Type of Habitat? vegetated mud flat

When? date(s): 13 May, 1988 time: 5:25 PM <sup>CO<sup>t</sup></sup> For about  
<sub>10</sub> 5:50

Who? your name and address: Peter C. Petersen, 235 McCollan Blvd, Des Moines, IA 50315

Others with you: Walter Zuercher - (saw only in flight in flock of birds.) 5:25

Others before or after you: Carl Bender, F. Francis Moore, T.H. Grant, Jim Fuller

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.

Sandpiper about same size as nearby Pectorals with decurved, black bill, head, throat & breast rusty brown with some dark barring. Top of head & back had more dark bars. legs black, about Pectoral length. Belly cream to white. Obs. very brief - bird with Pectoral sdps + sub. Dowitchers. when I called to halt I had it all birds flew we could not relocate. I thought we thought we had a line on where they landed. Carl Thompson also present but looking into sun & some distance away.

Similar species; how eliminated: Breeding pl. Sandpiper - lacks decurved bill.  
Red knot - lacks decurved bill - larger, no dark barring below  
Dowitchers - much larger, long straight bill.  
Ruff - larger, yellow legs, bill not decurved.

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

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Birds about 50' away, (S.B. Dowitchers, Pect. sdps + Curlew S.) - Sun nearly directly behind obs - 10x40 Zeissbing.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen it in Spain.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Geo. guide - checked before & after. Master & Robbins checked after.

How long before field notes made? 20 min. this form completed? 4 1/2 hrs.

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