

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper  
15 May 1994  
Riverton A., Fremont Co., IA  
\*Ross Silcock  
P-0439 (recording), IBL 65:81

Record Number: 94-25  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Ross Silcock, P.O. Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653 [6/26/95\*]

RECORDING

Ross Silcock, P-0439

PHOTOGRAPHS

Doug Rose, P-0465

REFERENCES

Field Reports: none

Records Committee: IBL 65:81

VOTE: 5 A-D, 1 NA

A-D, Where are photos and recording?

A-D, Anxious to see photos.

NA, Although the field marks reported are characteristic of Sharp-tailed sandpiper, I do not think there are enough characters for the ID. The photos need to be analyzed for equally diagnostic characters as eyering prominence, bill shape and color, flank markings, and body shape. The photos should clinch the ID and this vote can be changes to A-P.

A-D, Because of the delay in documentation, my inclination was not to accept this record pending receipt of the photos and tape. All of the necessary details (from notes?) are present, however, for a positive identification. Heard call notes is most unusual for the lower 48.

A-D, The call note substantiates the more subjective field marks.

A-D, Doug Rose has recordings and photos as of 11/11/94.

RE-VOTE (by mail 1995 after outside consultation): 7 A-P

A-P, Alternate adult. The pictures are good and show the basic characteristics. The bill color and shape and breast streaking are particularly convincing.

A-P, I had assumed that the call notes would be those of a Sharp-tail, although I could not verify this from my personal experience and "bad ears." The eye line and cap do not look all that much different from some Pectorals that I have seen. The breast markings do not seem to have a sharp cut-off. Perhaps the marks on the sides are chevrons, but I can't quite make that out. I was unaware that the pointed tail feathers could be seen in the field. Proctor's opinion was very helpful to me in this case.

A-P, I need to hear the recording again before I can vote A-R on this record.

A-P, Credit for this sighting is B. J. Rose, who made the identification.

94-25

November 9, 1995

Noble Proctor  
43 Church Street  
Branford, CT 06405

Dear Noble,

Would you be willing to review a spring record of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper from Iowa? We have one documentation, seven photos, and a tape recording of the bird as it was flushed.

We have no experience with sound identification of this species. The only alternate-plumaged Sharp-tailed Sandpiper that I have seen was the one you and Carl Bendorf flushed out of a marsh at Alexai point on 26 May 1986. I have notes on what that bird looked like but I don't remember hearing it.

I haven't been able to locate any recordings of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. I know you are good on sandpiper sounds and hope you have heard sharp-tails.

I went back to Attu in 1994. It was nice to have a small group, and we saw some good birds. It wasn't the same as 1978 and 1986 without your good humor, but I did manage to avoid any death marches.

I have enclosed a postcard for you to let me know whether or not you can review this record for us.

Best regards,

Thomas H. Kent, Secretary  
IOU Records Committee  
211 Richards Street  
Iowa City, IA 52246

Hi Tom -  
Good to hear from you.  
Been some time since  
Attu! Sure, will go over  
the Sharp-tailed record.  
Heard a lot in Russia  
this past spring. Great  
birding on the North Korea  
& China border. All the  
Attu birds in breeding  
plumage & in song!!  
So send the info  
along. My best -  
Noble

"PIPING PLOVER" by Julie Zickefoose.

The U.S. Dept. of Interior lists the piping plover as endangered or threatened throughout its historic range.

BIRD WATCHER'S DIGEST, Box 110, Marietta, Ohio 45750

T. H. KENT  
211 RICHARDS ST.  
IOWA CITY, IA 52246

Lu.  
28  
BIRD

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

94-25



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

IOWA BIRD LINE

319-524-3569

11-19-95

Dear Noble,

Thanks for your help with the enclosed record — 1 doc, 1 audiotape, 7 photos.

Tom

T. H. KENT  
211 RICHARDS ST.  
IOWA CITY, IA 52246

Dear Tom -

Sorry to be late in getting this back. Piles of work!!  
Call is a Sharp-tail. I heard plenty in Russia this spring.

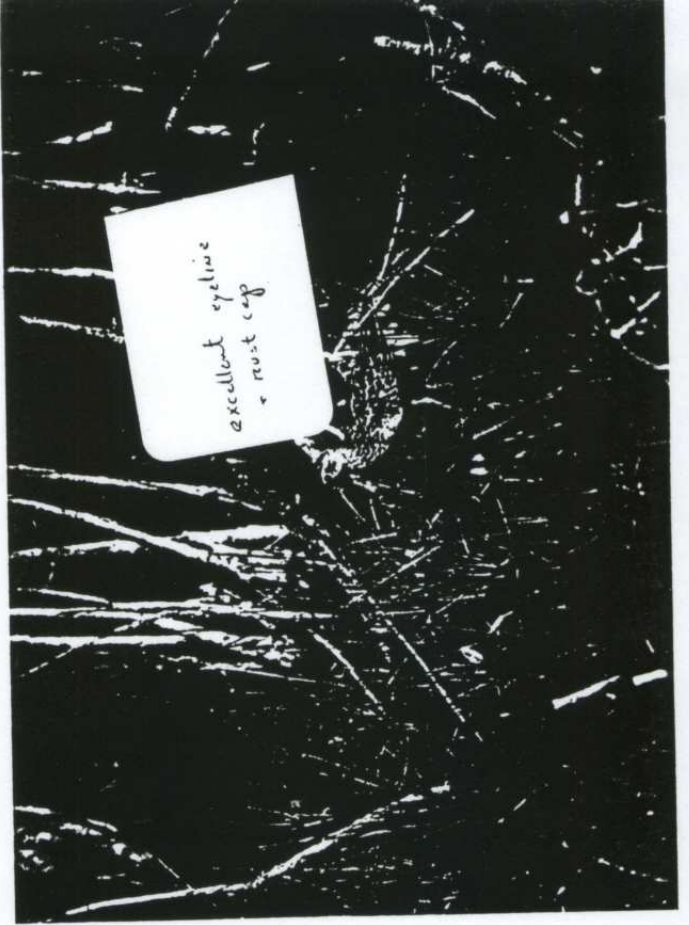
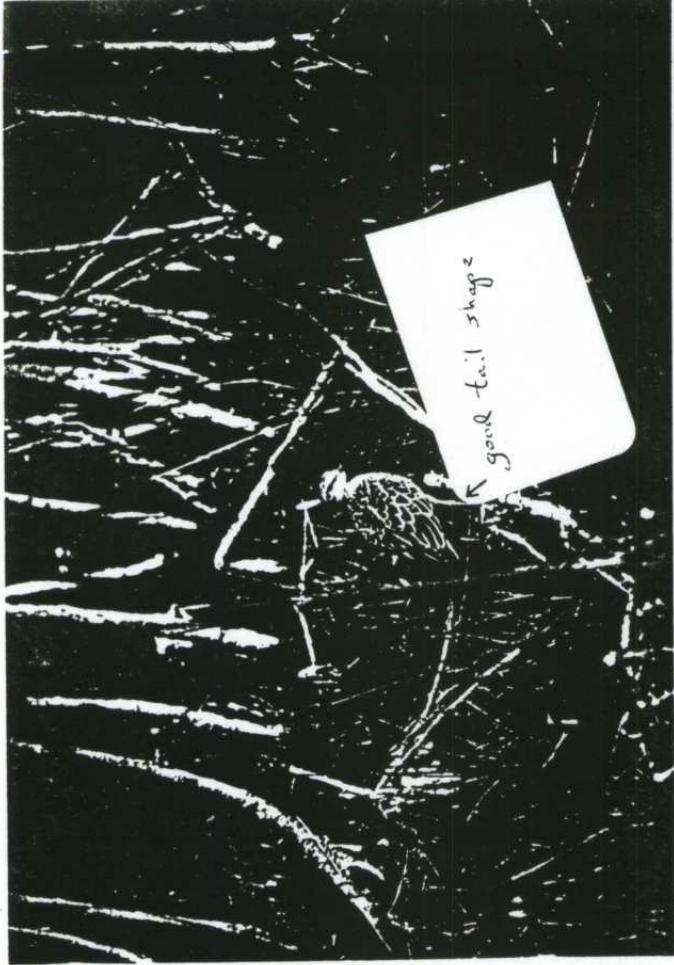
I made some notes on photos.

To re - there is no doubt it's a Sharp-tailed. One doesn't always get good photos & certainly not a good recording (should as it may be - it does the job.)

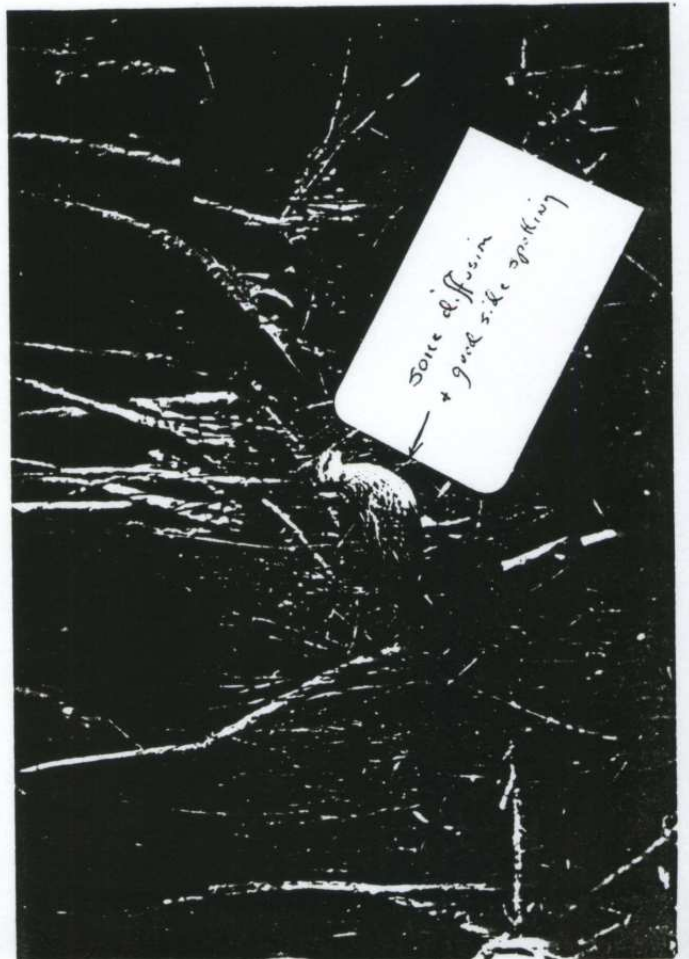
My best -

Noble

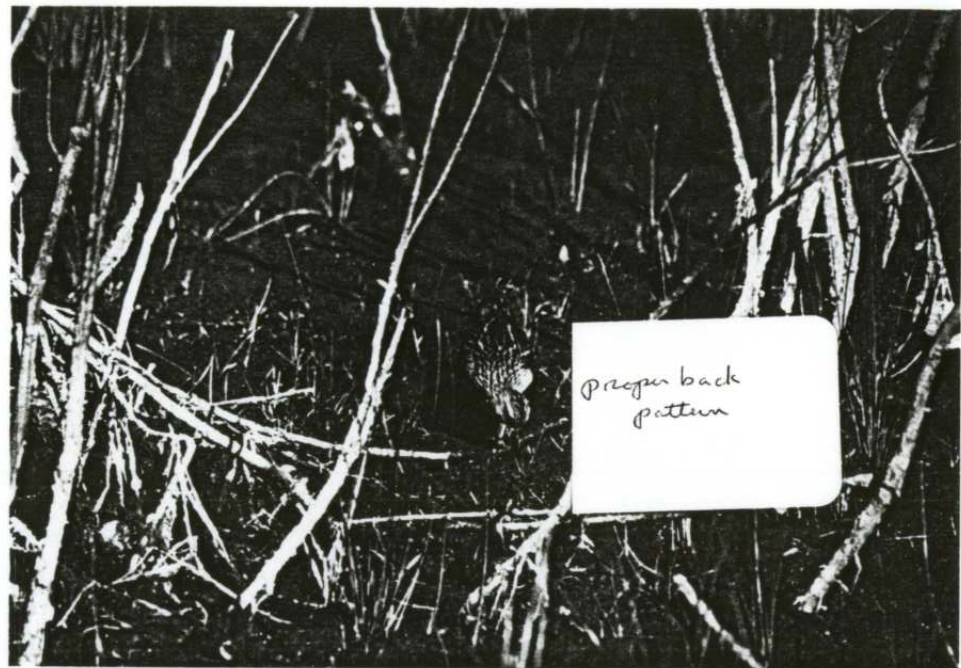
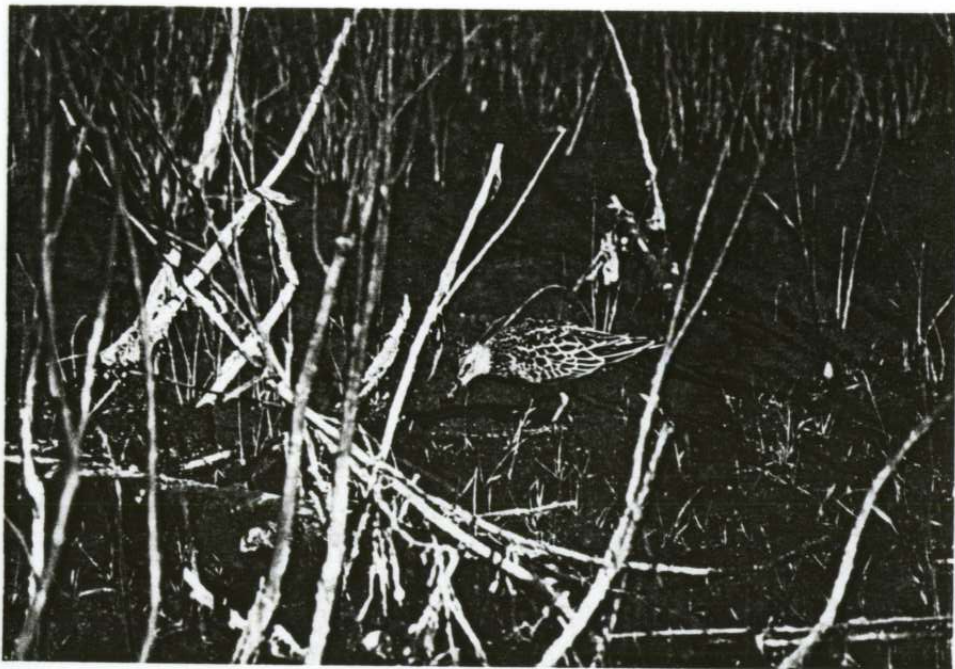




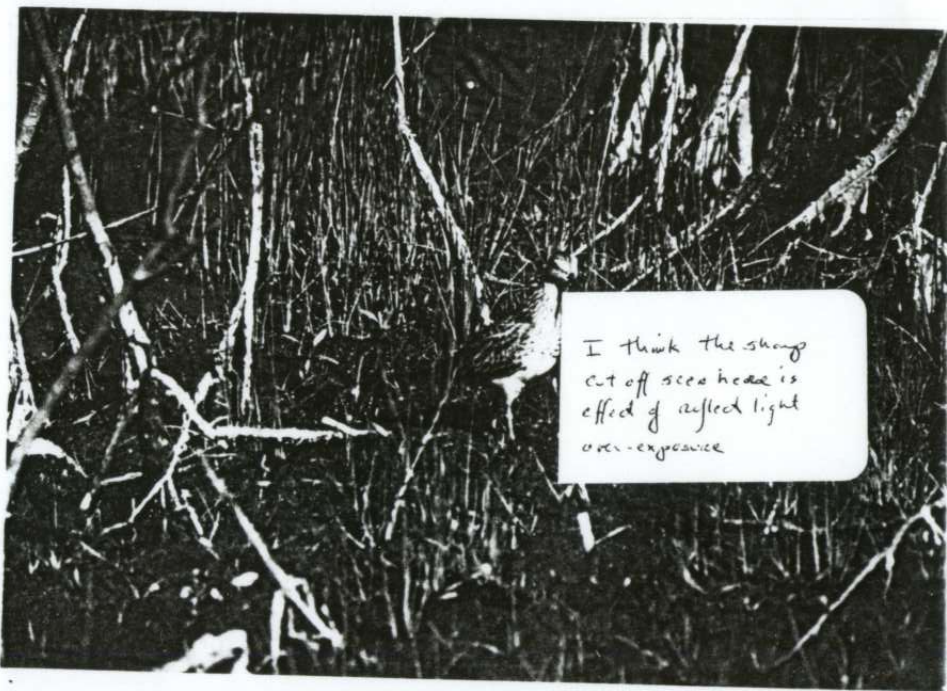
94-25







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94-25









Sharp-tailed Sandpiper P-0465  
Riverton A., Fremont Co., IA  
15 May 1994 Doug Rose 9422

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94-25

Iowa Rare Bird Documentation

SPECIES: SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (adult)

OBSERVERS: Ross Silcock, B.J. Rose, Roger Rose, Doug Rose

DATE OF OBSERVATION: May 15, 1994

TIME OF OBSERVATION: About 10.30 am

DATE OF REPORT: 5 September 1994

LOCATION: Riverton GMA, Fremont County

DISTANCE FROM BIRD: About 15 feet

LIGHT: Perfect; sun was behind us as we observed bird from the car, which was facing north.

OPTICS: I used 10 X 40 Optolyth binoculars

NARRATIVE: We were doing a Big Day sponsored by Southwest Iowa Birders when we noticed 3 Pectoral Sandpipers in a ditch on the west side of the gravel north-south road in the northeast part of the GMA. About 20-30 feet north of these 3 birds was another, which B.J. immediately stated was a Sharp-tailed. Doug began to comment, but B.J. said "Shut up and take pictures!". Suffice it to say, all I heard from then on was the sound of 2 cameras taking pictures. Meanwhile, I was able to study the bird at close range in perfect light at my leisure. It resembled a Pectoral Sandpiper, but differed in the following ways: the crown was streaked, and showed noticeable rufous coloration in the feathering; the off-white superciliary stripe was lengthy and broadened towards the rear; the breast markings were dense as in a Pectoral but did not show a clearcut ending at the whitish belly, but instead ended indeterminately by gradually fading out.

After the photographers were done, we decided to flush and record the bird as it departed. Once ready to record, we flushed the bird and it gave a soft series of notes, somewhat like a Lesser Yellowlegs, but rather flat and unmelodious. This call was most unlike the harsh, grating call of a Pectoral Sandpiper.

IDENTIFICATION: Plumage, time of year, call upon flushing, and key plumage differences from Pectoral Sandpiper, cited above, led us to identify this bird as an adult Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

DISCUSSION: Many photos and a recording will be available from B.J. Rose and Doug Rose. I realize this late documentation loses much credibility on its own, but it is provided for information about the sighting, primarily.

Ross Silcock  
PO Box 300  
Tabor, IA 51653

