

Whimbrel
17 May 1996
Riverton Area, Fremont Co., IA
*Jean B. Braley/Marie Tiemann
IBL 66:103, 67:81

Record Number: 96-29
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jean B. Braley/Marie Tiemann, 103 Southview Circle, Shenandoah
51601 [4/6/97]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:103
Records Committee: IBL 67:81

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, The sight date corresponds with most Iowa sightings.

A-D, Well described birds, but seems like a large number.

A-D, Striped head pattern and decurved bill described by
birders familiar with the two candidates. The number is amazing!

A-D, Description adequate to eliminate other likely
possibilities. Observers experienced. This was a good spring for
Whimbrel flocks: 2 flocks of 29 and 23 were reported in
central-western Nebraska 16 and 18 May, neatly sandwiched the
date of this report. Some 63% of Nebraska reports are in the
short window of 10-24 May.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

96-29

What species? WHIMBREL (Numenius phaeopus) How many? 8 (+/-)

Location? RIVERTON, IA. STATE AREA

Type of Habitat? MARSH, MUDFLATS, SLOUGH

When? date(s): MAY 17, 1996 time: 9:00 AM to 9:20 AM

Who? your name and address: JEAN B. BRALEY, 209 W. THOMAS AVE, SHENANDOAH, IA
MARIE TIEMANN, 103 SOUTHVIEW CIRCLE " "

Others with you: JUST THE TWO OF US

Others before or after you: NOT THAT WE KNOW

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 BIRDS OBSERVED, STANDING IN A GROUP, WERE LARGE, DRAB BROWNISH-GRAY, WITH LONG, DECURVED BILLS. THROUGH SCOPE AND BINOCULARS WE WERE ABLE TO SEE EYE LINES AND DARK HEAD STRIPES. THE UNDERPARTS APPEARED TO BE LIGHT. SINCE THE BIRDS REMAINED BEHIND A SMALL ISLAND OF VEGETATION, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO SEE THE FEET. THE UPPER PART OF THE LEGS WERE DARK. THERE WERE EIGHT BIRDS, WHICH REMAINED GROUPED TOGETHER WHILE WE WATCHED. AT ONE TIME, WE BOTH THOUGHT A NINTH BIRD MOVED BEHIND, BUT DID NOT COME INTO CLEAR VIEW. THERE WAS LITTLE MOVEMENT, SUCH AS FEEDING, AND LOCATION DID NOT CHANGE MEASURABLY.

Similar species; how eliminated: THE BIRDS WERE SMALLER THAN LONG-BILLED CURLEWS, AND THE CURVED BILLS SHORTER. THE STRIPED HEADS FURTHER ELIMINATED LONG-BILLED CURLEW. THE DECURVED BILLS SERVED TO DISTINGUISH WHIMBRELS FROM OTHER SHOREBIRDS OF SIZE: IE. GODWITS, POSSIBLY WILLETS, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, ALSO COLORING AND ACTION. THERE WERE YELLOWLEGS FEEDING THE AREA AND A LOT OF SMALLER SANDPIPERS

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

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

GOOD LIGHT - LOOKING NORTH-WEST WITH SUN TO OUR BACKS
DISTANCE ESTIMATED: 100 FT (+/-) (WATER AROUND MUD/MARSH AREA TOO MUCH TO WADE THRU TO GET CLOSER)

BAUSCH & LOMB 8X42 ELITE; BUSHNELL 10X50 BINOCULARS & KOWA TSU4 SPOTTING SCOPE W/ 30X WIDE ANGLE LENS

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
WHIMBRELS SEEN AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR IN YUMA, AZ & AND CA - MEXICAN AREAS
LONG-BILLED CURLEWS (10-80 (+)) ON DESERT HILLS GOLF COURSE, DRIVING RANGE + ADJACENT PARK AREA ALL WINTER; ALSO COMMON IN

References and persons consulted before writing description: FIELDS NEAR YUMA + IN S. CALIF. (DALTOWSEA, ETC.)
JEAN + MARIE COMPARED NOTES, IMPRESSIONS ABOUT DISTANCE, ETC.

BOOKS CHECKED TO VERIFY IDENTIFICATION: STOKES; ROBINS; ETC.; NATL GEO; PETERSON, TERRES, ETC.

How long before field notes made? OLD REMAINS this form completed? JUNE 18, 1996
TO CAR FROM MARSH.

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

HAVE ALSO SEEN WHIMBRELS + LONG-BILLED CURLEW AT 59 AND CREEK. WWR IN MOY. BUT SEPARATELY.