

Long-billed Curlew
12 Nov 1968
Emmet Co., IA
Carl Priebe
ISU #2496, Priebe 1990, Dinsmore 1992

Record Number: 93-HX
Classification: A-S

SPECIMEN

Iowa State University #2496

REFERENCE

Priebe, C. 1990. Long-billed Curlew in southwestern Iowa. IBL 60:20.

Dinsmore, J. J. 1992. Recent additions to the Iowa State University bird collection. IBL 62:1-8

Photograph: IBL 62:4 (Dinsmore)

VOTE: 5 A-S

A-S, I have seen the specimen, but did not examine it well. From the photograph alone, I am not sure that I can exclude Far Eastern or Eurasian Curlews. The bill seems too long for any other curlew, but I would feel better if the bird were measured and the the under wing and upper tail examined and compared with Eurasian species. The data about the specimen appears to be secondhand. The year of collection differs between Priebe (1990) and Dinsmore (1992). There appears to be a tag on the specimen, although we do not know when it was put there or what it says. From informal conversations with Dinsmore, I am inclined to believe the data on this specimen is correct./thk

A-S, Note bird in photo on p. 4 of article is 93-HW, not 93-HX. /jjd

LONG-BILLED CURLEW IN SOUTHWESTERN IOWA

CARL PRIEBE



During the afternoon of 11 April 1989 I observed a Long-billed Curlew and a Marbled Godwit feeding in shallow water on the Riverton Wildlife Area in Fremont County. Both birds were a plain brown color similar to that of a hen pheasant. I watched the birds from approximately 3:45 to 4:15 p.m. and then called Ross Silcock to get a second observer. By the time Ross arrived, the birds could not be relocated.

The two birds were feeding about 70-80 yards away from the dike I was on. The smaller of the two, the Marbled Godwit, had a long upturned bill that was orange at the base changing to black at the tip. The larger bird, the Long-billed Curlew, had a longer bill, perhaps 10 inches, that was curved slightly downward. It also had a faint eye line with a lighter area above the eye. The body size of the Long-billed Curlew appeared to be almost as large as a hen pheasant.

The Long-billed Curlew was noticeably larger than the Marbled Godwit. Another curlew, the Whimbrel, also has a down-turned bill but it is about the same size as a Marbled Godwit or slightly smaller. The White-faced Ibis likewise has a long down-turned bill but in spring its plumage is a dull purple. The combination of the large body size, coloration, and the extremely long down-curved bill identify the bird I saw as a Long-billed Curlew.

Previously, there have been only four accepted sightings of Long-billed Curlews in Iowa in this century, the most recent being in 1932 (Dinsmore et al., "Iowa Birds", Iowa State Univ. Press, 1984). During the last 30 years there have been several spring sightings in neighboring states. These include three in Illinois, all in April, and at least four at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Missouri only 45 miles southeast of Riverton. Three of the four were seen in April and one was in late May. The species nests in western Nebraska and South Dakota. There have also been a few sightings in recent years that have not been documented. A specimen taken in Emmet County on 12 November 1968 is in the bird collection at Iowa State University (#2496). Conservation Officer Don Priebe has also seen single Long-billed Curlews at the Riverton Wildlife Area twice during his 21 years of service in Fremont County (personal comm.).

Box 490, Sidney, IA 51652.

REVIEWS

The Birds of Illinois by H. David Bohlen, illustrated by William Zimmerman. Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington. 1989. 221 pp., hardbound, \$57.50. This new work for our neighboring state is a hybrid between a coffee-table book with full-page color paintings and a careful catalog of distribution, abundance, status, and period of occurrence for the 439 species (including 35 hypothetical species) found through 1987. The 49 color plates by Zimmerman depicting 87 species are nicely done and well reproduced but probably doubled the book's price.

The six-page introduction briefly describes the state's physical features. Two maps are provided: one shows counties, major cities, and rivers, and the other locates 50 major birding areas. Several prime birding areas including the LaSalle County Nuclear Plant, the top waterfowl hot spot in north-central Illinois, are omitted. Definitions of terms of abundance and a brief discussion of conservation in Illinois conclude this section.

The species accounts emphasize distribution and abundance in this century, current status of each species, timing of migration, habitat preference, and nesting information. To check the species accounts, I carefully read the account of the Double-crested Cormorant, a species that nests in good numbers in the portion of Illinois I regularly bird. The one-page account was accurate except for a typo in the nesting section (Doubled-crested Cormorant) and a few omissions. Two winter records in "Iowa Birds" were overlooked; a 15 January 1975 record and two that wintered on the Mississippi in 1980-81. Likewise, an American White Pelican that wintered in 1975-76 at Cordova, Illinois was not mentioned. Very likely other Illinois records from along the Mississippi River but published in "Iowa Birds" or *Iowa Bird Life* were overlooked.

The book concludes with a nine-page literature cited section, two-pages of initials and corresponding names of observers, and an index to bird species. It is well bound, and the double-column format makes for easy reading of the fact-filled species accounts.

It is difficult to rate this book against other recent offerings from Midwestern states since most contain more information than this one (i.e., "Iowa Birds" and "Birds in Minnesota"). Those of similar format are "The Birds of Indiana" (1984) and "The Birds of Ohio" (1989). This book is much like Peterjohn's Ohio book with a bit more emphasis on dates, the plates being identical. The Indiana book put a strong emphasis on breeding species; all were illustrated and larger type was used for their accounts. In total "The Birds of Illinois" is well done and reasonably accurate, but may seem a bit expensive to those who are more interested in the text information than the color plates.--Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803

Birds in Kansas, vol. 1 by Max C. Thompson and Charles Ely. Univ. Press of Kansas, Lawrence. 1989, 404 pp., hardbound \$25, softbound \$14.95. It has been 25 years since Richard Johnston wrote "A directory to the birds of Kansas" (Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist. Misc. Publ. 41, 1965), and so publication of an update has been eagerly awaited. As one who has spent many hours wading through back issues of *American Birds* and the Kansas Ornithological Society's newsletter, I speak from experience of the frustration of trying to compile records of occurrence of Kansas birds. Thus I was happy to see this new book, written by two long-time Kansas ornithologists.

93-AK

Dinsmore of Ames at the television towers near Alleman, Polk County on 21 September 1985 (#1897, IBL 55:124). An immature male was found dead in Cherokee by Dick Bierman of Cherokee on 20 October 1987 (#2424, IBL 58:18). An unsexed bird found dead by Carl Kurtz near St. Anthony, Marshall County on 4 April 1991 (#2544, IBL 61:114) is the earliest spring report of the species in Iowa.

Purple Gallinule: A female with a broken leg (#1648) found by Lorna Volmer of Ames on 22 May 1978 died the next day (Dinsmore and Graham 1979). It is the only specimen of this species from Iowa (Fig. 4).

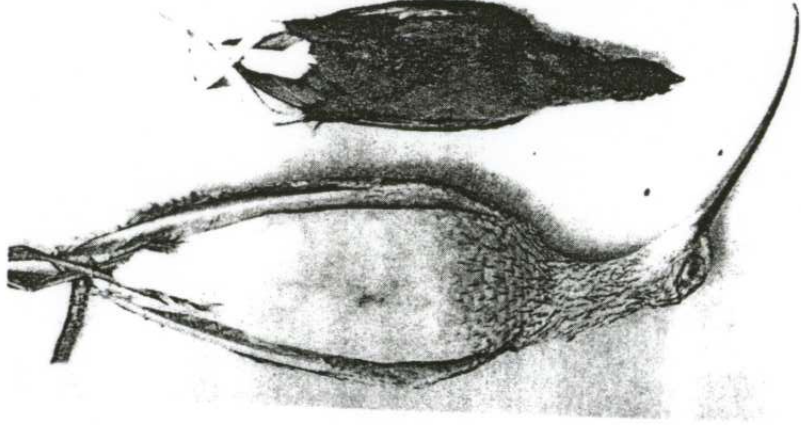


Figure 4. Long-billed Curlew (#2496) from Hornick, Iowa and Purple Gallinule (#1648) from Ames, Iowa.

Sandhill Crane: Bob Kurti of the D.N.R. found an injured male at Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County on 13 November 1979; it died on 24 November 1979 (#1651, IBL 49:112).

Piping Plover: Babs and Loren Padelford of Bellevue, Nebraska found a male dead at the Iowa Power and Light Ponds near Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County on 11 June 1983 (#1771, Fig. 5). There are few Iowa specimens of this endangered species.



Figure 5. Piping Plover (#1771) found dead near Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Iowa Bird Life, Winter 1992

American Avocet: Laura Jackson of the D.N.R. found a dead avocet in a pond near Martensdale, Warren County on 13 September 1985. It apparently was killed by a turtle, and its bill and neck were damaged. It was made into a study skin (#1915), one of the few from Iowa.

Long-billed Curlew: One was shot near West Swan Lake, Emmet County on 12 November 1967. The bird was mounted and held privately until 1988 when Carl Priebe of Sidney became aware of it and had it donated to Iowa State University (#2496). Carol Henderson of the Minnesota D.N.R. gave Iowa State a study skin of a male (#2520) collected by Harold L. Bond of Tiffin, Iowa. Data on the tag indicate it was taken near Hornick, Woodbury County but the date on the tag is not completely legible and reads Ma. 31, 1893; most likely it was taken in May (Fig. 4).

Western Sandpiper: Among the specimens received from Philip DuMont was a juvenile female taken by DuMont near Mitchellville, Polk County on 23 August 1933 (#2016, Fig. 6). DuMont has described this bird elsewhere (DuMont 1933a, b). Paul Bartsch collected three at Burlington on 15 October 1895 (DuMont 1933b).

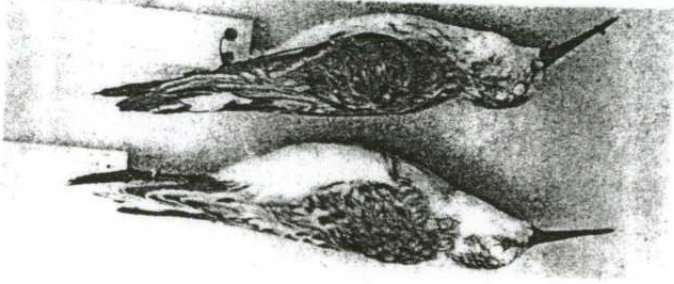


Figure 6. Western Sandpipers (top, #2016) found near Mitchellville, Iowa and for comparison (bottom, #569) from Lost Island Lake, Iowa on 28 July 1934.

Least Tern: The left wing of an adult bird was found by Steve Dinsmore of Ames at the Iowa Power and Light Ponds, Pottawattamie County on 30 May 1988 (#2478)(Bendorf and Kent 1991). It appeared to be the remains of a bird killed by a predator. I also received a study skin (#2519) from the collection of Harold L. Bond of Tiffin, Iowa. This bird was taken on a sandbar in the Missouri River in July 1894 (Fig. 7). Stiles (1938) took two adults on the Missouri River near Sioux City in 1937 but those specimens cannot be located. Thus, these two are the only specimens of this species from Iowa.



Figure 7. Least Tern (#2519) taken on the Missouri River.

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