

**Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form**  
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

2005-096

**Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!**

CBRC FILE #:

**RESULTS:**

Species: (Common Name) Curlew Sandpiper

(Scientific Name) *Calidris ferruginea*

Date(s) of occurrence: 18 Sep 2005

Number of birds seen: 1 (one)

Sex: Unknown

Plumage: Juvenile

Exact location: Prewitt Reservoir (northwest shore, near inlet)

County: Washington

Nearest town:

Elevation: 4,099 feet

Length of observation: 2 hours (off and on)

Time(s) of observation: 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Bill Maynard

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Bill Schmoker, Joe Roller, Paul ?, and others.

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position):

Quality – bright sun with few clouds

Direction – sun was overhead and behind observer. The sun illuminated the bird and made for great viewing conditions.

Optical equipment used: Binoculars and spotting scope

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): The Curlew Sandpiper (CUSA) was observed at an ~ 100 foot distance from observer in shallow, muddy water and at an ~ 200 foot distance from observer on muddy shore.

Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? Yes

If so, are you submitting photos?

Who took the photograph(s)? Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, and Bill Schmoker

Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred:

General habitat – Prewitt reservoir's northwest shore, near inlet

Specific habitat – shallow, muddy water near shore and muddy shore

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: CUSA searched for food by probing shallow, muddy waters in a sewing motion that was very similar (if not identical) to the feeding behavior of nearby Stilt Sandpipers (STSA). CUSA fed with a large group of STSA's. Occasionally, the CUSA's head was almost completely submerged during feeding.

**DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report.**

**SIZE:**

The bird was the same size as a STSA, but slightly shorter legged. This was observed when the CUSA was feeding in close proximity to a STSA, in the same water depth, and the STSA's upper tarsus were exposed approximately one-two inches while the CUSA's tarsus were barely exposed at approximately 1/2 inch.

**BILL & LEGS:**

The CUSA's bill curved slightly downward (unlike the straight bill of the STSA). The bill appeared slightly curved during the entire length of the bill. The bill shape was very similar to that of a Dunlin. Both the bill and legs were black.

**BODY DESCRIPTION:**

The rump was white. When the CUSA preened its tail feathers, it completely exposed its white rump. When the CUSA took flight with the group of STSA's, the white rump was also exposed.

The CUSA's flanks and undertail coverts were clean and white (unlike the dusky flanks of the STSA). There was a warm, buffy to light brown wash/speckling on the CUSA's breast that was similar to the breast of a Pectoral Sandpiper (PESA). However, the bird's breast was lighter in color and the wash/speckling did not extend as far on the bird's breast as it did on a PESA.

The feathers on the CUSA's nape, back, and wings displayed dark feathers with buffy to white terminal tips (unlike the gray back of a STSA). When the CUSA preened and extended its leg and wing in a stretch, a white line was exposed at the base of the primary and secondary wing feathers. This white wing stripe was also seen when the CUSA took flight with the group of STSA's.

The CUSA's supercillium was bold and white. The supercillium arched over the eye, the highest point of the arch being directly over the eye and the lowest point of the arch being after the eye. The CUSA had black lores.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted:

**SIMILAR SPECIES – This is another critical part of your report.** Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration:

Stilt Sandpiper was eliminated due to the following characteristics:

- Gray back (with no buffy to white terminal tips on feathers)
- Straight bill and dull yellow/green legs
- **Absence of white, wing stripe in flight**

Dunlin was eliminated due to the following characteristics:

- **Dark rump**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

I do not have any prior experience with Curlew Sandpipers. I do have limited experience observing Dunlins in basic plumage and Stilt Sandpipers in basic plumage.

The Curlew Sandpiper was feeding with a flock of Stilt Sandpipers and both species were in the same field of binocular and scope view on numerous occasions. Observing these two species feeding side by side allowed for careful study of the subtle, but distinct characteristics that separates these two species.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation):

*Birds of North America* by David A. Sibley and *Shorebirds of North America* by Dennis Paulsen

This report was made from (check one) ☐ notes made during observation ☒ notes made after observation ☐ later from memory.

Date and time of written report: 22 September 2005, 1350

Reporting observer: Kara Lewantowicz

Signature:

Reporting observer's address: 2290 Skyview Lane, Apt. 2104

City: Colorado Springs

State: CO

Zip: 80904

**Send report to:**  
**Colorado Bird Records Committee**  
**Larry Semo**  
**9054 Dover Street**  
**Westminster, CO 80021**