

Species: SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER
 (Vernacular Name)

Limnodromus griseus

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): September 6, 1976 Time Bird Seen: 2:15 P.M. to 2:45 P.M.-MDT

Locality: East shore of Jackson Reservoir

Nearest Town: Goodrich

County: Morgan

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

None

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: _____

Light Conditions: Excellent; bright sunlight directly upon bird several times.

Distance from bird (how measured): 250 feet down to as close as 30 feet (estimated)

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Non-breeding

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Typical dowitcher behavior. Probing head down into mud flats. It was with a rather large group of other shore birds, mostly Baird's and Stilt Sandpipers with a scattering of the smaller "peeps". It was the only dowitcher in the area that I saw.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

Unquestionably a dowitcher. A long, straight, blackish bill, considerably longer than head. Rich brownish upper parts. Pale pinkish underparts. White rump extending in a tapered patch well up on the lower back which was most prominent when the bird flew. Chunky appearing shore bird only slightly larger than Killdeer. I first noticed this bird as it fed on a mud flat with many other shore birds. The noticeably short bill for a dowitcher caught my eye. I was able to approach the bird to within about thirty feet on three occasions before it flushed. The belly and flanks were spotted very slightly. I could discern no barring what-so-ever on the belly and flanks. On the first two occasions that I approached the bird closely, I tried to establish whether or not the tail extended beyond the wings as it tipped up to feed. Due to rather strong breeze, the bird's wing feathers were ruffled and I was not able to satisfactorily tell wing length as compared to tail length. On the third try, the bird settled down in a small cove and as it tipped up to feed I could readily see that the tail did extend beyond the wings. I am not certain however that this is a true field mark or a reliable one when attempting to separate L. griseus from L. scolopaceus in the field. In any event, this particular field mark is very difficult to see in my opinion.

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

I flushed the bird on three occasions up and down the shore line. On one occasion it gave a flight call - "tu-tu" (double-noted). On another occasion it gave a triple note - "tu-tu-tu". On the other time I flushed it, it gave no sound at all.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Fresh water reservoir with ample shore line of mud flats; high plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Godwits: Have upturned bills.

Curlews: Have decurved bills.

Common Snipe: Has heavily striped crown and back and lacks white rump patch.

American Woodcock: Has barred crown and is warm, brown overall coloration.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Normally discloses barring on flanks. Gives a weak and plaintive flight call - "keek" - "keek", considerably different from the call given by L. griseus. Supposedly L. scolopaceus has wings longer than tail, a field mark I am not certain is completely valid.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: .

In July of this year I saw and heard over one hundred dowitchers on Long Island, New York. Everyone gave the characteristic - "tu-tu-tu" call. I have separated the two dowitchers in California on a number of occasions by their different calls. Have seen the Short-billed Dowitcher on two prior occasions in Colorado when I felt satisfied I could make out their distinctive calls.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

None.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Jack Reddall SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: Sept. 7, 1976
Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110