

APPENDIX II

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

A

Species: Short-billed Dowitcher ; Limnodromus griseus
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 19 September 1984 Time Bird Seen: 8:20 a.m. to 8:55 a.m.

Locality : HART'S BASIN (FRUITGROWER'S RESERVOIR)
ECKERT, DELTA, COLORADO
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell Sentry II 20X ; NIKON 9x30 binoc.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: one Sex: ? Plumage: juvenile

Light conditions: Bright sun; sun at back or over shoulder; always right on bird

Distance from bird, and how measured: As close as 60 feet (paced) for long periods.

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Solitary; no other dowitchers present; did not associate with nearby Pectoral Sandpipers, L. Yellowlegs or Killdeer. Fed constantly by probing bill into mud in up & down manner, sometimes partially submerging head. Usually walked when it fed, walking away from me so I had to constantly move towards it. Two times, after flying, it preened back, wing, tail, & breast feathers with bill, then resumed feeding.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:
Open mud flats with 1-2" of clear water running slowly over it.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Body slightly longer than L. Yellowlegs. Legs dull grey above "knee", dull yellow below and fairly long. Bill gray with orangish tones proximally; widened at tip; about $1\frac{1}{2} \times$ as long as head (appeared shorter than most Long-b. Dowitcher bills). Head & neck grayish brown; weak light superciliary. Breast light cinnamon with grey wash, mottled at sides ("shoulder" area); abruptly becomes white at belly, continuing whit through legs, vent and undertail coverts where a very faint cinnamon wash took over. Sides of tail (undertail covert margins) was spotted with round black dots, not bars. From above, the tail was barred black & white with white bars as wide as black. When landing the spread tail is light gray appearing whitish at a distance (tail of Long-billed D. appears dusky). Rump is whitish with wedge of white going up back. On back: Wing covert dk. grayish but scapulars all two-toned: dark brown to nearly black, margined broadly and evenly with bright cinnamon buff. Some of lower scapulars had bright cinnamon-buff markings in center along vein as well. Tertiaries were long and narrow extending nearly as far as wing tip; these feathers were broadly margined with bright cinnamon buff and had wavy, irregular central markings, especially along the shaft, of this same color. The feathers appeared "tiger-stripped". These back feather patterns were easily seen at close range & were distinctive. Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--

i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

I listened for the bird's alarm or flight song but, although it flew 3 times I never could hear it over the calls of hundreds of Killdeer and other birds which also flew. It probably did not call.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: Only other long-billed, yellow-legged bird with white wedge up back is Long-billed Dowitcher. It is eliminated (juvenile) because it has gray scapulars & tertiaries with dark tips, narrowly edged with cinnamon-buff; no internal markings (this bird had broad margins, blackish feathers, internal markings). Tail of Long-b. D. has narrow white bars, smaller than black bars. Cinnamon tones to underparts of this bird; Long-billed D. is grayer.

Prior experience with this and similar species: Much experience with Long-billed Dowitcher in Colorado & elsewhere since 1973. Little experience with Short-billed. Numerous birds in basic plumage Febr. 1983 in Calif (identified by call). Few birds in alt. plumage April 1984 in E. Texas coast.

This report was written from notes made during ☒ after observation; from memory ☐.

(Feathers redrawn from field notebook)

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9-19-84

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Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

Will try to photograph or have someone else confirm if bird is still there this weekend.