

1999 - 40

CFO-ORC FILE #

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

Red 10/7/99 wjpl

ACCEPT 7-0

Species: Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*)**Date:** 25 August 1998 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** unknown **Plumage:** juvenile**Locality:** Rd. 48, south of Lower Latham Res. **Elevation:** 4665'**Nearest town:** Greeley **County:** Weld**Time observed:** about 18:30 MDT **Duration of observation:** 10 minutes

Description: I found a dowitcher (largish, plump, very-long-billed shorebird without distinct head stripes as in Common Snipe (COSN)) on the north side of Rd. 48, west of Rd. 47, in a small pool south of Lower Latham Res. I immediately recognized that it was a juvenile Short-billed (SBDO), so proceeded to study it and write field notes. There were a few adult Long-bills nearby, but this bird was not particularly associating with them.

The bird was very bright, with strong buff-rufous fringing on most upperparts feathers. The head and face were a warm brownish-gray, not contrasting strongly with the bright orangish breast. The orangish breast contrasted rather strongly with the white belly. The sides and flanks were lightly spotted with dark brown. The scapulars and tertials were brown with wide, bright fringes and internal squiggles. The upperside wing coverts were generally much-less-heavily fringed and the fringing color was paler. There were few or no internal squiggles on the individual coverts. This created a contrast between the bright scaps and the duller wing coverts. The rectrices appeared to have wider pale bars than dark bars, but I only saw this feature well briefly. I could discern no gray, unfringed, Basic feathers coming in on the bird.

Similar species eliminated: Adult Long-billed Dowitcher (LBDO) ruled out as the bird had a white belly and strong fringing and internal markings in scaps and tertials, yet showed no signs of going through the Pre-basic molt (any white-bellied adult LBDO is obviously in molt, so gray Basic feathers should be obvious in the upperparts). Juvenile LBDO was easily eliminated by the following features: head color (usually gray in LBDO contrasting strongly with orangish breast), scapular and tertial pattern (no internal squiggles in LBDO), contrast from scaps to coverts (both sets of feathers are fairly plain in LBDO, thus not creating a strong contrast in brightness), tail barring (LBDO has wider dark bars than light), and timing (juvenile LBDOs usually don't appear in CO until later in the season). Stilt Sandpiper eliminated by plumage pattern and bill structure (bill did not have terminal droop).

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): The bird was not heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen bazillions of SBDOs (mostly *griseus*, but quite a few *hendersoni*) and 1000s of LBDOs, and many 100s of Stilt Sandpipers. No other species is at all similar. My experience with dowitchers is mostly in eastern North America where birders search through SBDOs looking for LBDOs, so I know the former very well.

Light conditions: sun was behind me and to my left

Optical equipment used: Leitz 10x40; Kowa 30x wide angle

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at 100 feet minimum distance

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: the bird was seen for an additional two days by others, I believe, including Joe Himmel

If photographed, type of equipment and film: not

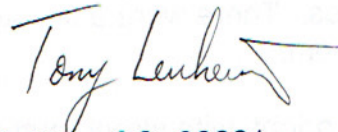
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: This report was written (from field notes taken at the time of observation) on 15 September 1998 and 4 October 1999.