

CFO-ORC-FILE# _____

Red 1/6/00 upl

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORMResults: ACCEPT 7-0

Species:

Short-billed Dowitcher

Limnodromus griseus

Date: October 9, 1999. I relocated what I believed to be the same individual on Oct. 10, but did not take a long look.**Number of birds seen:** 1**Sex:** unknown**Plumage:** Juvenile molting to winter**Locality:** Fossil Creek Marsh, on the west side of Timberline Road, 1/2 mile north of CR 32**Elevation:** 5000 ft.**Nearest Town:** Fort Collins**County:** Larimer**Time Observed:** 9 am.**Duration of observation:** 30 minutes**Other observers with you:** Jennifer Rivas**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** None to my knowledge**Light conditions:** excellent. Mid-morning, on a sunny day, looking west with the sun at my back**Optical equipment:** Leica 10X42 Trinovid binoculars, Bushnell Sentry 18-36X50 spotting scope**Distance from bird:** 20 m. at closest**Describe the bird's behavior:** The bird was foraging in mudflats and shallow water. After coming close, it made several short flights directly away from me, then later returned with three Long-billed Dowitchers.**Describe the bird:** The bird was a typical dowitcher in terms of size and shape, with a bill that appeared to be of average length for a dowitcher. The crown was gray streaked with darker gray. The eyebrow was whitish, with a dark gray eyestripe. The bill was dark, with dark pinkish flesh color at base. The neck was buff-gray, streaked finely with gray. The back was gray, vaguely streaked darker, with several black feathers with bright rusty edging. The scapulars showed a few gray feathers, but were mostly black, with distinct bright rust edging, internal wedging and barring on the feathers. This color was noticeably brighter than the dark reddish edging visible on a nearby Long-billed Dowitcher in the same plumage. The wing coverts were gray with vague pale feather edges, as were the primaries and tertiaries. There was one feather that might have been a tertial, but might also have been a scapular, that was dark, with bright rust edging and tiger barring. The throat was pale, the neck and upper breast were pale buff with gray streaking on the nape extending into the edges of the upper breast. The lower breast was pale buff, the flanks were richer buff, almost rusty, with faint dark spotting. The center of the belly and the vent area were white, the undertail coverts white lightly barred with black. The tail feathers were barred black and white, with the white roughly equal to the black.**Describe the bird's song and call if heard:** None heard**Describe the habitat in which you found the bird:** Fossil Creek Marsh is an area of cattails and mudflats surrounded by a small area of pasture. The bird was in an area of mudflats, covering perhaps 1 acre.**How did you eliminate similarly appearing species:** Long-billed Dowitchers should show no internal markings on scapular feathers, but rather a dark reddish or dark rust edging, in this plumage. An adult molting into fall plumage might approximate the pattern seen on this bird, but the feathers showed little if any evidence of wear, and according to Kaufmann's Advanced Birding, the molt should be just about finished by late September. Thus, any adult still showing breeding feathers in October should appear heavily worn. The tail did not appear to rule either species out, as they overlap to a fair degree in this trait.**What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:** I have observed Short-billed Dowitchers on several occasion in Illinois and elsewhere, and have seen numerous Long-billed Dowitchers in Colorado as well as a few elsewhere.**List books if they helped in your identification:** We examined Peterson's Western Birds while observing the bird, as I couldn't remember which way the tail pattern goes. After the fact, I examined Kauffmann's Advanced Birding to make sure of the molt timing. This report, however, was written from notes taken before I left the site, and had only looked at Peterson's.**Reporting Observer:** Paul SweetSignature Paul Sweet**Address:** 3113 Sharps St.,
Fort Collins, CO 80526
psweet@lamar.colostate.edu