

1997-25  
2011-14-5  
PHOTOS

RARE BIRD SIGHT RECORD

ACCEPTED 7-0

Hudsonian Godwit

Limosa haemastica

Submitted by:

David C. Ely  
213 Annabel Lane  
Fort Collins, CO 80525  
(970) 491-7364 (Day)  
(970) 225-1047 (Evenings)

Status: Unusual record

Date: 2 May 1996 OK

Number of birds seen: One

Sex: Male

Plumage: Adult breeding

Locality: Duck Lake, Larimer Co. CO. Duck Lake is located along the southside of Larimer Co. 32 RD, approximately 1.5 miles west of Interstate 25 and 1/4 mile west of 9 RD. The site is approximately 4 miles southeast of Fort Collins.

Elevation: roughly 5,000 feet

Time(s) Observed: The bird was first seen from 1245-1300. I then left to alert a few other birders to its presence and returned at 1330, remaining until 1400.

Duration of Observation: A total of 45 minutes was spent observing and photographing the bird.

Other Observers: The bird was seen independently by the following observers:

Bill and Paula Lisowsky  
2919 Silverplume Drive  
Fort Collins, CO 80526  
(970) 225-6827 (home)

Jonathan Bowser  
Current address unknown  
(970) 416-1418 (home)

Light Conditions: It was a very bright sunny day with few clouds. The sun was directly overhead at the time of observation. I did have problems with the glare on the water.

Optical Equipment: Minolta 10 x 50 binoculars and a Bushnell 15-45x spotting scope.

Distance from Bird: At first I was on the west side of the lake when I spotted the bird with my scope in the

northwest corner of the lake. I was about 200 yards away from the bird at that time (estimated). I drove around to the north side of the lake and was then as close as 20 yards to the bird (also estimated).

Photography: I photographed the bird with a Nikon FM camera with a Sigma 210mm lens. I used Kodacolor 200 Gold film. I have enclosed 4 photographs of the bird with this report. Lamentably, they are not outstanding.

Others who photographed the bird: Bill Lisowsky

Behavior of the Bird: The bird was unwary and near 32 RD which is a paved, busy road. It was occupied feeding along the north shore of the lake, usually several feet from shore. I never saw the bird fly or do much else except probe for food. There was nothing in terms of the behavior I observed that aided in the identification.

Description: When I first saw the bird I was about 200 yards away from it and detected it in my scope while scanning the shoreline. My initial impression was that it was too large and brightly-colored

to be a dowitcher. I also thought it had a bicolored bill. This was enough to make me think I should hustle over to the north shore of the lake for a closer look. I was pretty convinced at this point that I was seeing a Hudsonian godwit. When I next saw the bird I was, at most, 60 feet away.

The bird had a grayish head, sharply contrasting with the dark chestnut underparts. The eye was dark with a white supercilium. The back was dark with the mantle feathers and scapulars having pale tips. There was dark barring on the sides and flanks. The uppertail coverts were white. The bill was bicolored with an orangish color for the proximal 2/3 and becoming blackish for the distal 1/3 (tip). The bill was upcurved and didn't seem to be as long as in a nearby marbled godwit. The Hudsonian godwit was noticeably smaller than the marbled godwit.

Vocalizations: None were given during the observation period.

Habitat: The edge of Duck Lake is devoid of trees. It is surrounded by grassy pasture with some patches of cattails on the southern end. There was exposed shoreline with some alkali patches present.

Elimination of Similar Species: I eliminated both long-billed and short-billed dowitchers because the bird

was larger and more brightly-colored than nearby long-billed dowitchers. The observed bird also had an upcurved, bicolored bill which dowitchers do not possess. The upcurved, bicolored bill also eliminates such large waders as willet, long-billed curlew, and whimbrel. The bright coloration also eliminates these species. Marbled godwit was eliminated because the observed

bird was smaller. In addition it had a grayish head contrasting with bright chestnut underparts and dark upperparts. The observed bird also had a white rump or uppertail coverts. Marbled godwits are uniformly mottled brown. The only other possibility is the black-tailed godwit and this species lacks the rich chestnut underparts, grayish face, and dark mantle with pale tipped feathers seen in the observed bird.

Prior experience with this and similar species: I have observed marbled and Hudsonian godwits together at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivara NWR in central Kansas. I have seen marbled godwits many times in Colorado. I have lots of experience with the other large shorebirds (willet, long-billed curlew,



whimbrel) in many states, including Colorado. I have observed dowitchers many, many times in much of the central and western U.S.

References used: a) at time of observation- none

b) after observation- Field Guide to the Birds of North America National Geographic Society. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. 1987. Washinton, D.C.

Shorebirds: An Identification Guide. Hayman, P.,  
Marchant, J., & T. Prater. 1986. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
Boston, USA.

This report was made from notes after observation.

The report was made on 23 April 1997 at 2230 (11pm). It was typed on 6 November 1997.

Reporting observer: David C. Ely