

2004-4

COLORADO RARITY DESCRIPTIONS, May 2004
Paul Lehman, P.O. Box 379, Cape May, NJ 08204

Dear Tony, Chris, and Colorado Records Committee,

Here are details on the Glossy Ibis and Hudsonian Godwit I saw in Colorado in May 2004. You will also be getting video of both birds from Steve Mlodinow.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: west end John Martin Reservoir, Bent County, 17 May 2004

We (Steve Mlodinow and I) arrived along the north shore near the center section of John Martin Reservoir and quickly realized that the best mudflat habitat was farther to the west, at the present upper end of the lake. But first I spotted a very distant godwit, probably almost a mile away, feeding on the mudflats. It was just too far away to identify for certain, but its overall shape suggested it was probably a Hudsonian rather than a Marbled. We then nosed our way via car farther west and ended up immediately adjacent to the west-end mudflats, affording us excellent views of the many, many hundreds of shorebirds present (actually a couple thousand or so), and almost all of them in good light. In short while we re-found the godwit and easily identified it as a Hudsonian. It was probably a female, or perhaps a bird only in partial breeding plumage. Compared to a Marbled it was about the same size, but slightly thinner overall, and more attenuated in the rear, likely the result of somewhat longer primary projection. It was a good-sized (i.e., large) shorebird, with a somewhat upturned, godwit bill that had an orangey-flesh base and a dark tip. The upperparts were mostly a dark grayish-black with some small-sized light spotting or flecking. There was a whitish supercilium. The pale underparts had some fairly distinct, thickish, rufous-chestnut barring on the lower breast and upper belly, but was not solidly that color as in full alternate males. There were also a few short blackish bars on the flanks. Although the bird spent almost all its time actively feeding, and we never saw it fly, it preened a little bit and raised its wings briefly once, so I was able to see the mostly black tail contrasting with white rump area, and the upper surface of the wing showed a limited white wing-stripe. I never saw the underwing. Steve was able to get some nice video of the bird.

--Paul Lehman