

**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
SIGHT RECORD FORM**
RESULTS: _____

recd 7-15-98

*ACCEPTED (7-0)
(FIRST STATE RECORD)
PHOTO x2*

SPECIES:  CURLEW SANDPIPER
(COMMON NAME)

Calidris ferruginea
(SCIENTIFIC NAME)

DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE: June 30 & July 1, 1998

DATE OF THIS OBSERVATION: July 1, 1998

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1

SEX: probable female

PLUMAGE: adult alternate

EXACT LOCATION: west side of Neeskah (Upper Queens) Reservoir

COUNTY: Kiowa

NEAREST TOWN: May Valley

ELEVATION:

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: approx. 45 min.

TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 7:45 - 8:00 am

8:30 - 9:00 am

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW AND INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD(S):

The bird was initially found and identified by Duane Nelson on the afternoon of 6/30. On the morning of 7/1, there were approximately 14 other observers who saw the bird. These included: Joey Kellner, Chris Wood, Karleen Schofield, Warren Finch, Brandon Percival, Bob Dickson, Dave Silverman, and Jack Reddall.

LIGHT CONDITIONS [QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION]:

Weather was clear with bright sunlight. Sun was fairly high and basically at right angles to line from observer to bird.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED:

Bushnell 10x binoculars and Bushnell Spacemaster scope (20-45X). I was also priveleged to see the bird through Bob Dickson's Questar scope.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): approx. 150 feet closest.

WAS THE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? Yes IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOGRAPHS? No
WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? Duane Nelson and Chris Wood that I know of.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED:

Irrigation reservoir shoreline

BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION):

The bird was observed feeding along the shoreline with several other shorebirds, mostly Wilson's Phalaropes (*Phalaropus tricolor*), but also at least 2 Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), 1 Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*), and a few "peeps" (*Calidris* sp.). At one time, I was able to observe and compare the Curlew Sandpiper and an alternate-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper in the same field of view through my scope. When the Curlew Sandpiper flew, it was with 20 or more other shorebirds and I was not able to pick it out of the flock.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD(S) [INCLUDE OVERALL SIZE AND SHAPE; PLUMAGE DETAILS INCLUDING HEAD, THROAT, UNDERSIDES, NAPE, BACK, WINGS, AND TAIL; AND COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYE, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT IN MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MARKS USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD(S)].

This was a medium-sized, relatively long-legged shorebird, about the same size or slightly smaller than the nearby Wilson's Phalaropes. Overall appearance was of a dark reddish-brown shorebird with a blackish back and a long decurved bill. Its most distinctive characteristics were its bill and its color. The bill was quite long and gracefully downcurved throughout its length. The head, neck, breast, and belly were a rich chestnut-red color. There was an indistinct pale area at the base of the bill, and the indistinct supercilium appeared pale. Some feathers on the flanks and belly had pale gray or blackish edgings giving a barred look to the area. Undertail coverts were white with some blackish spotting. The scapulars appeared blackish with red-brown edges. Uppertail

coverts appeared white with dark brown barring. Tail appeared gray brown. Wing coverts appeared grayish or pale brown and were more uniformly colored than the scapulars. Underwings appeared white. Legs were black

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW THEY WERE ELIMINATED:

The Curlew Sandpiper in alternate plumage is unique; there really are no "similar species". The bill is somewhat similar in length and shape to those of Dunlin (*C. alpina*) and Stilt Sandpiper (*C. himantopus*), and the color was somewhat similar to that of Red Knot (*C. canutus*) and Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) in alternate plumage, but no other species has the combination of a relatively long, gracefully decurved bill and reddish-chestnut head, neck and underparts of Curlew Sandpiper in alternate plumage.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES:

.Curlew Sandpiper: No previous experience (this was a life bird!)

Other species mentioned in this report: I have considerable experience with all of them in Colorado and elsewhere in North America

BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS, OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THESE INFLUENCED IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 2nd ed. (pp 128-129) - during and after observation

Shorebirds - An Identification Guide. Hayman, Marchant, and Prater. Houghton Mifflin, 1986 - after observ.

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING X OR AFTER X OBSERVATION,
OR LATER FROM MEMORY

DATE OF THIS WRITTEN REPORT: July 15, 1998

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