

19-92-21

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

Limosa haemastica

Location: Farm pond S. of Lower Latham Res. (west of Rd. 47 on Rd. 42); near Greeley; Weld County, Colorado

Date: May 18, 1992

This bird was found by others and was on the taped Rare Bird Report prior to my observation of it.

Setting:

I observed this bird with Brandon Percival. It was at a shallow farm pond. We observed it around 10:00 a.m. for about 20 minutes but were unable to locate it at the same pond later that afternoon. We watched it through a Kowa scope at 20-60X and through our binoculars at distances of about 100-200 yards. The sun was bright and from our backs. Viewing conditions were excellent.

Description:

The bird waded on long legs in shallow water at the muddy edge of a stock pond. Cattle used the pond at the same time and many times the cows and the godwit waded together. We never saw the bird in flight, but once I watched it raise its wings high above its back and I saw the narrow white wing stripe and rather narrow white band across the rump.

It was a large, dark shorebird, about 15" long. The bird was in breeding plumage. The bird was deep chestnut-colored below with black bars on the flanks. It was grayish-brown above with an orangish neck and upper breast. The head was gray with an indistinct whitish supercilium and blackish eyeline. The back was mottled with lighter spots. The bill was very long and gently curved up. It was red at the base and blackish distally. The undertail was white with black bars. The legs were dark. As noted previously, the rump was white.

Similar Species:

The large size and recurved bill eliminate most other shorebirds. Willet and Greater Yellowlegs have straight bills and are not red underneath. An. Avocet is brightly patterned and orange above. Curlews have downcurved bills. Marbled Godwit is plainer below, not reddish, lacks black and white undertail, lacks white rump, has straighter bill. Bar-tailed Godwit lacks white rump, is less red below and lacks black barring on flanks. Black-tailed Godwit has strong white wing bar, straighter bill, white throat and black-banded whitish underparts.

Experience with Species:

I have seen many Marbled Godwits. I have seen two previous Hudsonian Godwits in Colorado, both in breeding plumage as was this bird (both May 1988). I saw small flocks of Hudsonian Godwits in Texas in April 1984. I have never seen Bar-tailed or Black-tailed godwits.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.

Mark Janos

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A second Hudsonian Godwit was seen May 14, 1992, at 4:00 P.M. at a pond on CR #42 just east of CR #45 in Weld County, CO. This is approximately three air miles south of Latham Reservoir, east of La Salle.

A week ago I was driving past Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas, and, of course, it is completely dried up. Dust "devils" blow in every pond. I'm wondering if this condition might be dispersing some of these birds west of their usual flyway.

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