

Send to
LOS - B.R.C.
TOM SHULENBERG
L.S.U. M-Z
DRAWER M.U.
LSU. BATON ROUGE
LA 70803

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM

89-39 A

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 adult, winter plumage
3. Locality: Louisiana: Holly Beach (Beach just west of town) Parish: Cameron
4. Date(s) when seen: 12/18/88
5. Times of day when seen: 11:30; 12:00
6. Reporting observer and address: Phillip Wallace, 4515 S. Prieur St., N.O., LA 70125
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
Cecil Kersting, Curt Sorrells
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird: Al and Gwen Smalley, Jim Holmes, Jr., Gary Rosenberg inter alia
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Variable; able to observe from various angle, many with good light.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):
Bushnell scope (22X), Questar
11. Distance to bird: 15'
12. Duration of observation: Initial: 1 minute Subsequent: 15 minutes
13. Habitat (general and specific):

Rocks and sand (initially) at edge of gulf.

14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification): Feeding with Ruddy Turnstones, then in flight; finally at rest.

15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):

Dumpy sandpiper; seemed larger (fatter) than Ruddy Turnstones with which it associated.

Dark gray back; white belly; streak flanks.

Yellow-green legs.

Bi-colored bill, yellow at base, dusky toward tip. Long bill (2 1/2 - 3 in.)

In flight showed dark rump.

16. Voice: None

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

Distinguished from Dunlin by bill color, leg color, streaked flanks, etc.

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

Gwen Smalley, Gary Rosenberg

19. Previous experience with this species:

My first experience.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) at time of observation: *National Geographic*

b) after observation:

21. This description written from: notes made during observation; notes made after observation; memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes. If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter: *Billy A. Wallard*

24. Date and time of writing this account:

2/3/89

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Purple Sandpiper - *Calidris maximilla*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): Only one, winter plumage, sex? age?
3. Locality: Louisiana: Holly Beach Parish: Cameron
W. of Holly Beach at E end of rock fill by Hwy 82
4. Date(s) when seen: Dec 18, 1988
5. Times of day when seen: noon
6. Reporting observer and address: Cecil Kersting, 4003 Georgetown Dr
Metairie, LA 70001
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
Curt Sorrells, Phillip Wallace
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird: Cawen & Al Smalley, David Muth
Ken Rosenberg, MOB
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): open sun, side lite
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):
8X40 and 10X40 Binoculars
11. Distance to bird: 40 ft.
12. Duration of observation: 2 min.
13. Habitat (general and specific): First seen on sand beach adjacent to
rock fill along gulf coast.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification): It was working the beach in assn. with Ruddy
Turnstones.
15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):
Plump sandpiper, dumpy, uniform dk gray back.
Bill black, two toned, reddish at base, bill mod. long,
drooped. Legs yellow-green.

16. Voice: Not heard

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

Rock sandpiper

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

By Gwen Smalley
& Ken Rosenberg

19. Previous experience with this species: Viewed along Canadian & New England coast and Great Lakes area in winter. Saw at close range at Gulfport MS within last yr.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) at time of observation;

Not Geog Birds of No. Am.

b) after observation:

21. This description written from: X notes made during observation; _____ notes made after observation; _____ memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? Yes. If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter: Cecil P. Norsting

24. Date and time of writing this account:

Jan 2, 1989, p 4 p.m.

Purple Sandpiper (basic plumage) (*Calidris maritima*)
 18 December 1988 some high overcast but mostly clear; cool; breezy 2:30-2:45 pm
 Highway 82 about two kilometers west of Holly Beach, Cameron Parish, Louisiana
 other observers: Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann, Peter Scott

When Donna found the third state record of this species on the west jetty at the mouth of the Calcasieu River the previous day on the Sabine Christmas Bird Count, it prompted other observers to look along Holly Beach to see if there might be another one there. It turned out that there was, because this bird was found during the Johnsons Bayou Christmas Bird Count (even though it was outside of the circle!) the next day by someone unknown to me. The bird was hanging around on the rocks just below where there is a large pull-out about where the highway begins running right along the beach. Because there were fairly few rocks exposed at high tide. We easily found the bird and watched it sit around and forage for about fifteen minutes before it picked up and flew about a half-mile to the east to land out on an old pier. We left once it moved to this new spot because it was too far out for us to get good views. While in front of us, we were able to approach to within 15 meters of the bird while we had the mid-afternoon sun at our backs; in all, the viewing conditions were excellent. I used my 10 X 40 binoculars and my 22 X wide-angle scope to make the observations.

This bird looked almost identical to the Rock Sandpipers (*C. ptilocnemis*) that I have seen several of in a comparable plumage; in fact, the only real difference between this bird and the Rock Sandpipers was that this bird had relatively bright, almost orangish-yellow, legs. This bird had the same squat appearance with short, stout legs and a long, slightly drooped bill that is shown by the Rock Sandpiper. The head was a relatively even, dark gray. There was a small whitish spot in the supraloral area and a thin, but irregular eyering (seeming heaviest around the top-rear corner of the eye). The eye itself was dark. The gray of the face continued across the throat to about the upper breast in a relatively unmarked fashion. From here, it started becoming more and more mottled with white; at first it was mostly gray with some whitish speckling, but by the lower breast it was more like dark gray speckling on a white ground color. The lower belly was white, but the flanks were heavily patterned. Nearest the wings there were bold, blackish chevrons, but lower down it looked more like thin, black streaks. The undertail coverts were also patterned with streaks and chevrons. The upperparts were a dark gray with some darker markings on the feathers causing a somewhat mottled appearance. On the back and scapular feathers it appeared to be the feather centers that were the darkest. The wing coverts and tertials were quite dark centered (almost black), with fine, sharply demarcated, white edges; these edges did not seem quite as broad and were more crisp than I remember on basic plumaged Rock Sandpiper. The rump was also quite dark centered and connected the dark gray lower back

with a blackish tail; the sides of the rump were white, but this was not all that extensive. In flight a prominent white wingstripe was visible across the wing coverts. The bill was quite long for a bird of this size, and as noted above, was slightly drooped near the tip. The bill was mostly blackish but had some orangish-yellow near the base (especially on the lower mandible).

On at least one occasion when the bird flew it gave a call which sounded about intermediate between that of a Dunlin (*C. alpina*) and that of a Western Sandpiper (*C. mauri*), namely a relatively high pitched "chreek".

Finally I should note that this was a life bird for me, but that I have seen quite a few Rock Sandpipers (mostly alternate-plumaged birds in Alaska but also several basic-plumaged individuals in California).



Purple Sandpiper

LBRC 89-39

LA: Cameron Par.; 2 mi. W Holly Beach

Photograph: Steven W. Cardiff

