

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <[zoiseaux@lusfiber.net](mailto:zoiseaux@lusfiber.net)> .

1. English and Scientific names: Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
One adult

3. Parish: Terrebonne

Specific Locality: South end of Houma Lake

4. Date(s) when observed: 20 March 2019

5. Time(s) of day when observed: Approximately 5:15 p.m.

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Paul Sunby
City: Austin
State: Texas

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): None

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): None

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): A sunny afternoon; I was on St. Louis Canal Road on the west side of the lake looking across to the east, so sun was to my back and bird was in full sun.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Vortex Viper HD 20-60 x 80 spotting scope

11. Distance to bird(s): Approximately 1,800 feet. I said 1,600 feet in my eBird submission, but after measuring it using ArcGIS software, I believe it probably was closer to 1,800 feet.

12. Duration of observation: About 2 minutes

13. Habitat: Bird was standing in open water near the marshy edge of the lake. Some emergent stands of cattail in the water nearby.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): When first observed, bird was standing still in the water, but as I watched it occasionally reached down to dab at things in the water. It then flew to the south and went out of sight behind a stand of cattails, ending my observation.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*): I first looked for Limpkins at “the spot” along Hollywood Road. Did not see any, so I went up St. Louis Canal Road to see if I could find vantage points to scan for Limpkins elsewhere on the lake. While scanning using 20x on the scope I spotted a lone bird on the far side of the lake. It was far enough away that at first all I could see was that it was a chocolate brown wading bird with light spotting on the body. By “wading bird” I mean it was standing with a fairly vertical posture and had a longish neck. It was in the water and so I assumed that meant it also had rather long legs, but I could not see those until it flew later. It was alone and so I had no direct size comparisons available, but it appeared medium sized given the distance – not huge like a Great Blue Heron and not dinky like a Green Heron. That seemed a good candidate for a Limpkin so I cranked up the magnification to about 40x. With that as the bird bent over to reach its head down towards the water I could see its bill was moderately long, had some yellowish coloration and was fairly straight, not strongly decurved like an ibis. I watched it for some 30 seconds at that magnification and then it flew off to the south, staying relatively low and probably not moving more than a hundred feet or so, and went behind the stand of cattails. As it flew I was able to see the distinctive Limpkin flight profile – it held its neck straight out, longish legs trailing behind, with wings that were brown and rather broad, almost appearing to flare wider distally, and primary feathers splayed out. The wingbeats seemed floppy. The bird was too far away to get eye color; the legs appeared dark.

16. Voice: Silent.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The body of bird was a chocolate brown and dappled with light spots and the bill was straightish and showed yellowish coloration. That eliminates the possibility of the bird having been a *Plegadis* ibis as those have a dark, decurved bill and lack pale spotting (note that a Glossy Ibis was present along Hollywood Road at “the spot” that afternoon). The spotted brown body coloration and yellowish bill also eliminates the bird having been a Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, or Tricolored Heron. The only other medium-sized wading birds

that are brownish and can have light spots are young night-herons. The bird could not have been a young Yellow-crowned Night-Heron because their bills are black. A young Black-crowned Night-Heron does have yellowish coloration on the bill, but their bodies are more of a pale brown than a chocolate brown and their legs are relatively short. In flight their legs do not project much beyond the tail. This bird had long legs that extended well beyond the tail when in flight. The primaries of night-herons also do not splay out in flight like the primaries of this bird did. Night-herons also give the appearance of being pretty strong fliers with strong wingbeats – this bird had a floppy wingbeat.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): No. The bird was too far away for me to photograph.

19. Previous experience with this species: I have seen Limpkins many times over the past two decades, in Florida, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Colombia, most recently in Costa Rica in October 2018.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: None. Familiar with the appearance of the species.

b. after observation: Looked at Sibley Guide to get the scientific name for use in this report.

21. This description is written from:

<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

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

23. Date: 26 March 2019

Time: 1:30 p.m.

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes. \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, may we include your name with the report? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_