

295-01-2003

**Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)**

**Age:** adult breeding

**Date:** August 2, 2003, ~ 2:00 PM-3:30 PM

**Location:** Gull Point, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County

**Site:** Sandspit near the tip

**Observer:** Ben Coulter  
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**Other observers:** Geoff Malosh, Mark Vass, Dave Wilton

**Habitat:** The bird was seen resting near the edge of a pond, and was feeding in sand with sparse plant cover.

**Distance to bird:** Probably 100 yards distant at the closest.

**Conditions:** Completely overcast, with some wind. A cold front passed through the area in the late morning.

**Optics:** Swarovski 8.5x42 binoculars, Leica 77mm APO scope w/ 20-60x eyepiece, Nikon Coolpix 995

**Description:** Overall, this was a very large, sandy-brown sandpiper, with a long, recurved bill, and long legs similar in length to the bill. Its body was noticeably smaller than the accompanying Ring-billed Gulls, but it still dwarfed the Killdeers feeding close by.

The bird's head was somewhat blocky, with the forehead right at the base of the bill dark brown, becoming streaked and spotted with sandy towards the crown. There was also a brown loreal stripe running from the eye down to the base of the upper mandible. These bordered a sandy supercilium and supraloral, brightest right above the eye. There was a brownish eyestripe behind the eye, and light streaking on the auriculars. The neck was fairly long.

The upperparts of the bird were dark brown, with extensive buffy notching or barring on most feathers. The whole of the underparts were sandy-brown, with some faint barring on the flanks. There was also a faintly spotted breast band. The secondaries and inner primaries created a bright cinnamon panel when the wings were spread. The outer primaries had dark outer webs, and the primary coverts were dark. Most of the wing coverts showed dark brown barring. The entire underwing was cinnamon in color, especially the coverts and axillaries. The tail was sandy, with brighter cinnamon in the central rectrices, and with dark brown barring across all feathers and the uppertail coverts.

The iris was dark. The long, slightly recurved bill was dull pink at the base, with approximately the distal half dark, and was roughly 2.5 times the length of the head. The culmen was dark all the way up to the base of the bill. There was a slight bulge at the tip. The legs were bluish black, and about as long as the bill. The toes were quite long, with slight semipalmation between the middle and outer toes.

**Behavior:** The godwit was first found roosting with its bill tucked into its back feathers at over 600 yards away, so we had a tough time identifying it for several minutes. Later, we observed it feeding by probing with its bill in somewhat moist sand with scattered vegetation. It also bathed, and we saw it open and stretch its wings several times.

**Supporting Evidence:** see photographs by Ben Coulter.

**Similar species:** Bar-tailed Godwit is shorter-legged, and all subspecies lack cinnamon on the underwing or tail. Hudsonian Godwits have black axillaries and underwing coverts in all plumages, and also show a black tail and white uppertail coverts. Long-billed Curlew, while superficially similar, is substantially larger, with a very long, thin, decurved bill.

**Prior experience:** I have seen this species once before in Pennsylvania, in April 2002, at Presque Isle State Park. I also have experience with Hudsonian Godwit and Long-billed Curlew.















Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round <sup>ONE</sup>~~TWO~~

Species: Marbled Godwit (Limosa fedoa)

Date of Sighting: 8 August 2003 to 8 August 2003

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Ben Coulter

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: Ben Coulter

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

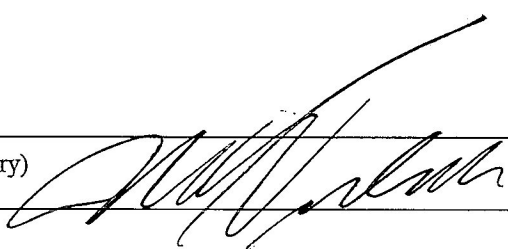
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Armistead	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

10/17/03