

295-01-2006

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)

Age/Plumage: juvenile

Time/Date: August 27, 2006, 6:30-7:20 PM

Location: Gull Point Special Management Area, Presque Isle State Park 42°10'N, 80°03'W

Habitat: The site consists of a series of sandspits and small ponds, bordered by willows, cottonwoods and other early successional vegetation.

Observer: Ben Coulter
3431 Argyle Ave
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Other observers: none

Distance to bird: The bird ranged from at least 150 yards to as close as 100 feet.

Conditions: Mostly cloudy. Temp. about 70 F.

Optics: Swarovski ELs 8.5 x 42, Leica Televid APO 77 mm w/ 20-60x eyepiece, Nikon Coolpix 4500

Shape/structure: The godwit was a buffy, large-bodied yet lanky sandpiper, with a long, slightly upturned bill. It dwarfed nearby Semipalmated Sandpipers yet was smaller than a Ring-billed Gull. The very long legs made the bird seem larger than it actually was. The bird often stood very erect, and craned the long neck to look around, while aiming the bill downwards a little. In flight, the bird's neck was pulled partway onto the shoulders, with the bill angled down slightly, and the feet projecting noticeably past the tail. The wings were rather long, and very pointed.

The iris was dark. The long, recurved bill was about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the legs, or roughly twice the length of the head, dark pink on the basal $\frac{1}{3}$, the remainder blackish, with dark bleeding up the culmen and the tomia. The legs (and feet) were dark gray, and quite long, particularly the tarsi. The visible portion of the tibia was about $\frac{1}{3}$ feathered.

Plumage: The base color of the bird was tan overall, and with darker markings as follows. The head showed darker brown streaking on the crown and nape, and dark lores slanting down to the bill base. The entire back of the neck also showed blurry dark streaks. The mantle, rump and scapulars were dark brown, with pale buffy notches or bars. The lesser and median secondary coverts were mainly buff, with thin dark brown markings internally. The greater secondary coverts were dark brown, heavily notched or barred buff. The outer flight feathers were mostly dark blackish, as were the upper primary coverts, with the inner primaries and secondaries becoming extensively marked with buffy, which, combined with the wing coverts, created an obvious buffy panel on the upper surface of the wing. The tertials were dark brown, deeply notched with tan. The underwing was bright cinnamon. The tail was tan, barred with dark brown.

Vocalizations: The godwit called several times on the ground and in flight, giving a low, hoarse *ker* or *ker-whack*.

Behavior: The godwit was restless, and did a lot of nervous walking around, with occasional sedate picking, but did not feed in earnest while I was observing it. About fifteen minutes after I found it, it flew from the largest sandspit at the tip out to a new pond on the outer beach, where I watched it until it put up into the air amidst gulls feeding on winged ant reproductives. The bird circled once, calling in flight and then I lost track of it in the gulls, and it was not relocated.

Supporting Evidence: see photographs by Ben Coulter

Discussion: The bird was aged as a juvenile by the uniformly fresh plumage, rather short bill (for a Marbled Godwit), and extensively pale wing coverts.

Similar Species: The ID of Marbled Godwit is usually straightforward. Long-billed Curlew is similar in plumage, but substantially larger, with a long down-curved bill. Bar-tailed Godwit lacks extensive buff on the plumage, and is proportionately shorter-legged. Hudsonian Godwit shows blackish, not buff underwings, and a white rump and dark tail band. Willet is much grayer, with striking black and white wings.

Prior Experience: This is my fifth observation of Marbled Godwit in Pennsylvania, and I have also seen the species in Ohio, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Texas.









Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Marbled Godwit (Limosa fedoa)

Date of Sighting: 27 August 2006 to 27 August 2006

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Ben Coulter

Date of Submission: 2006

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
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

4/16/07