

316-01-2002

Curlew Sandpiper

Date: July 25, 2002

Location: Near Tullytown, Bucks. Co., PA

I received a call from Devich Farbotnik about a Curlew Sandpiper found earlier in the day near the Pennsbury Manor Club in southern Bucks Co.

When I arrived, there were several birders observing the bird from approximately 75 yds. The bird was feeding in a mixed flock of Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Least, Semipalmated, Western and Pectoral Sandpipers and a Short-billed Dowitcher. The birds flew as a group closer to my location which was about 30-40 yds. away.

Description: The bird was a medium-sized shorebird roughly the size of a Pectoral Sandpiper. The head, face, throat, breast and upper belly were a dark brick-red color. The lower belly was a mottled dark brick-red and white. There were some black chevron markings on the flanks extending to the tail. The back was a dark-brown with what appeared to be buff edges to the coverts giving the back an almost scalloped appearance. The primaries of the folded wing appeared dark brown. A white rump was visible during a brief wing-stretch and in flight. The bill was medium-long in length about 2-3x the length of the head and decurved. The bill was heavier at its base than at the tip. The eye was dark and the legs were medium in length and dark. The bird gave the impression of being long-winged as the wings projected beyond the tail giving it a pointed rear look.

Separation from similar species:

Dunlin - at this date, an adult Dunlin changing from alternate to basic plumage, as this bird was, would still show a significant amount of black on the belly. The back on the Dunlin might be a brighter red-brown. Dunlin would also be slightly smaller with less of a flattened or pointed appearance in shape. The bill of the Dunlin is also decurved but it is not as long or as heavy as that of a Curlew Sandpiper.

Red Knot - this species is slightly larger, more upright and stout. Red Knot has a medium length straight bill. The underparts of the Red Knot would be more of an orange-red in color.

I think the combination of the dark brick-red coloration of the head, face, chest and belly and the medium length strongly decurved bill rule out other shorebird species.

Nick Pulcinella
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UNUSUAL SIGHTING DOCUMENTATION

Person Submitting: August Mirabella
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North Wales, PA 19454
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215-368-0594

316-01-2002

Species: Curlew Sandpiper

Observers: Found by: Dave Wilton

Seen by: Devich & Steve Farbotnik, A. Mirabella (confirming observers), and Mr. & Mrs. Nick Pulcinella, Mr. & Mrs. Bob Mercer, Dave DeReamus, Rick Wiltraut, Jason Horn, Ann Webster, Ian Baldock, Jim Hartley

Date Seen: July 25, 2002

Time: Found early morning. Devich & I watched it on and off until from about 9 am until after 6 pm.

Where Observed: Penn-Warner Club, Falls Twp., Bucks Co.

Conditions: Clear with light breeze. Sun overhead or behind us most of day. Seen as close as approx. 100 feet. Seen with Zeiss 7X42 Bins and Leica APO77 Zoom Scope

Behavior & Habitat: Man made impoundment with large water pool & mudflats probably totaling several acres. The bird was with several hundred other shorebirds of several species actively feeding and at times resting. Also, seen in flight several times.

Description: The bird was in beautiful nearly full alternate male plumage. It could be fairly easily picked out naked eye or with binoculars from most of the other birds due to its dark color. It was also larger than the majority of the birds, which were Least S., Semipalmated S., and a few Western S. Also present were one Short-billed Dowitcher, two Still S., a few Pectoral S., and several Lesser Yellowlegs. It was closest in size to the Pectoral Sandpipers that were present. With a Leica APO77 zoom, the striking details of its plumage were studied. The head, breast, and belly, extending down past the black legs, were mostly a dark red with whitish vertical streaks toward the rear flanks. The under tail coverts were white. There were dark, sparsely spaced, more or less in a line "spots" on the upper rear white flanks with a few into the red area of the flanks. The lower nape and upper back feathers were brownish, reddish. The back feathers were dark with reddish edges but the lower back feather edges were buffier. White spots flecked the back area as well. The folded wing tip was blackish and extended just beyond the tail. The wing coverts produced a contrasting pale gray area between the bright colored back and flanks. The light gray tail tip bordered the extensive white rump. This was seen when the bird sat and rested, preened, or was in flight. The bird was striking in flight as the dark red contrasted with the white rump, under tail, and bright white under wings with dark leading and trailing edges. It had a full light wing bar against a gray-black upper wing. The bill was black and curved down.

Similar Species Comparison: Dunlin would be closest in size and shape but does not have the red lower parts of this plumage. The Red Knot is plumper with a paler red face & belly, and shorter, straight bill. Dowitchers have much longer, straight bills. One adult breeding plumaged Short-billed Dowitcher was present for close comparison. Red Phalarope would have red throughout the underparts including the undertail coverts, a straight bill, and dark (black) cap.

Previous Experience: I have seen several Curlew S. in breeding, partial breeding, and one in near basic plumage over 30+ years of birding.

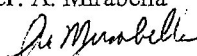
References during ID: The Sibley Guide to Birds

References after ID: Sibley and my videotape of the bird

Other Documentation: Video by A. Mirabella to be sent directly to PORC

Date of Report: 7/30/02

Signature of Observer: A. Mirabella





CURLEW Sandpiper 7/25/02
Tullytown, Bucks Co 316-01-2002
Devich Farböttnik

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Date of Sighting: 25 July 2002 to 25 July 2002

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Dave Wilton and multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: August Mirabella, Devich Farbotnik, Nick Pulcinella

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: Video

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

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):Date:



2/20/05