

Rare Bird Documentation for PORC:

Species: Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Number: 1

Sex, age, plumage: adult male nearing alt plumage

Date/time of observation:

13 May, 2004. Viewed the bird from approximately 7:45pm thru its departure. Time of departure was noted as 8:17pm.

Location:

Fly-ash basin at Martin's Creek PPL facility, Martin's Creek, Northampton Co, PA.

Observer(s):

Bill Etter

1030 Old Bethlehem Road #2

Perkasie, PA 18944

better@netcarrier.com

215-964-3613

The Curlew Sandpiper was viewed by at least 7 other birders, with photos and video obtained by several parties.

Habitat: The bird was feeding in the shallow water of the Martins Creek fly-ash pond.

Conditions: Conditions were good. Sun was setting behind us. Bird was seen in low, yet adequate late day sunlight.

Distance / Optics:

The bird was originally seen by me at fairly close range (within 100 yards) and approached more closely as it fed. It was viewed thru a spotting scope at 20x and photographed thru the scope at 0-3x magnification.

Description:

The Curlew Sandpiper was associating with a mixed flock of shorebirds, most of which were Least Sandpipers. The larger size of the bird was immediately apparent. There was a rufous cast to the head, face, back, sides, throat, and breast. Long bill was noticeably curved downward, similar to Dunlin, but more dramatic. Faint speckling/barring was apparent on the sides of the belly and vent. Vent was white. Bill was black, legs were mostly obscured, but also appeared to be dark.

Identification:

Curlew Sandpiper, adult male, nearing alt plumage.

Separation from similar species:

Based upon the immediate comparison with the much smaller Least Sandpipers, the bird was obviously a long-legged, larger *Calidris* type sandpiper with a longish, downward-curved bill. Of these, Dunlin could be eliminated due to the reddish hue of the face, head, breast and belly, as well as by the lack of black upon the belly. Overall hue eliminates Stilt Sandpiper. The larger dowitchers are eliminated by general structure, length and curvature of the bill, dark legs, and totally white vent.

Behavior: The bird waded and fed almost constantly, associated with a small flock of Least Sandpipers. It flew short distances on a few occasions. At approximately 8:15 pm, the flock began to circle, gained altitude, and departed to the north.

Vocalizations: None noted by me.

Supporting evidence: See attached photos obtained with Canon A80 Powershot digital camera thru scope at 20x magnification. Others obtained video and photos as well.

Notes on photos:

941a - shows general shape, structure, hue, etc, including pale vent.

964a - similar. Again, note vent, as well as faint speckling on sides, and curvature of bill.

967a - shows reddish head, breast, belly etc well

975a - size comparison with Least Sandpipers

Previous experience: I've had no previous experience with this species.

Certainty of identification: I am confident in my identification of this bird.

References consulted: I checked several major field guides (Sibley, Nat Geo, Richard's *Shorebirds*, etc) after viewing the bird.

Date of report: 19 May, 2004.

Signature of observer:

Bill Etter
Perkasie, PA





Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round ~~TWO~~ ONE

Species: Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea)

Date of Sighting: 13 May 2004 to 13 May 2004

Location: MARTIN'S CREEK PPL

County : NORTHAMPTON

Observer(s): Rick Wiltraut et al.

Date of Submission: 2004

Submitted by: Rick Wiltraut, Bill Etter

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

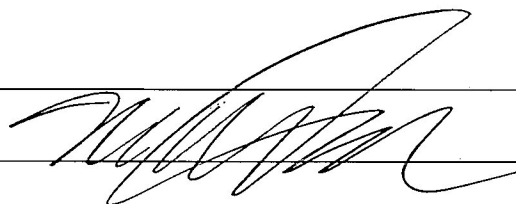
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut								
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	6							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary)



Date: 2/26/05