

321-01-1999

Ruff

Date: 05/08/1999

Observers: Jim Shoemaker and Jim Hoyson

Submitted by: Jim Hoyson (570)696-4925 birdder@aol.com

Location: Plains Flats, Luzerne County, PA

Weather: Sunny and clear

Time: 5:30PM

Equipment: Zeiss 7x42 binoculars and Kowa TSN 2 spotting scope w/30X wide angle eyepiece

Duration of sighting: Several minutes

Lighting: Sun behind me – excellent light on subject

Description: Jim Shoemaker and I observed a bird that at first we thought was a Stilt Sandpiper. However, when we viewed the bird through our spotting scopes, it became apparent that we had something entirely different. The bird stood very erect and had a somewhat smaller head in proportion to its plump body but not as pronounced as the head of an Upland Plover. It had long, heavy, lemon yellow legs. The bill was slightly larger than the head, was black, fairly heavy and had a very evident droop. There was no supercillium line but the face at the base of the bill was white giving the appearance of a female scaup (not quite as pronounced as a scaup). The overall color of the bird was grayish brown with scalloping on the back. The upper breast was washed with gray and had some scalloping towards the sides. The belly was white. The size of the bird was the size of Lesser Yellowlegs (also present) but decidedly heavier built.

Unfortunately we were distracted by two fisherman when the bird decided to fly and we missed seeing any tail pattern. Upon returning to our car we looked in Peterson's Field Guide to Eastern Birds and felt comfortable with Reeve as our initial identification. When I arrived home later that evening I looked through the National Geographic Guide 2nd edition and Shorebirds by Peter Hayman, John Marchant and Tony Prater, I concluded that we had observed a Reeve in basic (non-breeding) plumage. This sighting if accepted will represent a 1st record for Luzerne County and the 4th time that I have observed this species in North America.</DIV>

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