

321-01-2000

REEVE SIGHTING
8/1/00 "SHARTLESVILLE FARM POND" ON RT.
BY JAMES ECKERT

The pond at the farm just east of Shartlesville, just past the intersetion of Old Route 22 (Hex Highway) and Shartlesville Road, can be a good area to observe migrating shorebirds. Every few days I may check this area around noontime. There can be various exposed mud areas where birds can be seen. On 8/1/00 about 12:30 I observed a bird along a muddy strip of shore to the right of the farm driveway. It stood erect and dwarfed some nearby Least Sandpipers. The first impulse as to ID was Pectoral Sandpiper, by size and shape, but a closer look clearly eliminated that bird. During the 1995, 1999 drought conditions, I had been able to study many shorebirds that more commonly pass through Berks; what struck me was that I didn't just recognize this one.

From tail to head it was about the size of killdeers nearby, but more erect, with a shorter type bill from either yellowlegs, that curved slightly down, yellow at base turning dark to tip. It was a brown type sandpiper; the upper chest was brown with some scaling but not clean cut like a Pectoral, the head mostly scaly brown, with faint indication of grayish eyestripe. The back and wings were a typical sandpiper scaled brown/black. The belly was white, with no clear division from the smudgy to scaly pale brown of the chest. In flight, seen from the top, there was very noticeable white on tail area on sides, there was a thin dark stripe down the rump dividing the white. The bird was seen through 10X binoculars about 25 feet away for about 2 minutes before it flew off to a farther shoreline. The best "just like in the field guide" match was - SHOREBIRDS, AN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE (MAYRAN, ETC) PL 86 210 of JUVENILE PECTORAL SANDPIPER.

8/1 was the only date the bird was seen, but a Pectoral Sandpiper was observed hanging at the same spot on 8/3, which I instantly and easily recognized, with its clear articulation of scaly brown/black "pectoral" marking sharply defined from the belly. And in flight the white on tail wasn't nearly as striking as on the reeve.