

323-04-1996

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS IN CRAWFORD COUNTY
Ed Kwater.

On Saturday, September 21st 1996 I led a field trip for the Audubon Society of Western PA. After birding Presque Isle we decided to stop off at Miller's Ponds, Pymatuning, on the way home to Pittsburgh. The northernmost pond had a lot of exposed mud and, as usual, had attracted a number of migrant shorebirds. Amongst them I picked out 2 juvenile Long-billed Dowitchers, Limnodromus scolopaceus.

This identification was based on the following characters. The birds were slightly larger and noticeably bulkier than the accompanying Lesser Yellowlegs, Tringa flavipes, with extremely long bills. They were much grayer than juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers, L. griseus. The forehead and crown were dark brown, giving a "capped" appearance. The birds had very bold, white supercilia which began at the base of the bill and extended to well behind the eye, and this black eyestripe also extending from the bill through the eye to well behind the eye. The ear coverts and neck were very gray with a slight cinnamon buff tinge at the sides of the neck. There was a small black crescent on the ear coverts below each eye. The breast was gray with a cinnamon buff tinge, especially at the sides. The belly and flanks were whitish, washed pale cinnamon-buff, especially on the flanks. The hind flanks were barred and spotted with black. The undertail coverts were white, faintly washed cinnamon-buff, with several rows of small dark spots. The rectrices were heavily barred black and white, the black bars being much wider than the white bars.

The mantle and scapulars were dark brown with yellowish-orange fringes (much less orange than on Short-billed Dowitcher). The wing coverts and tertials were gray-brown with white fringes. Apart from these narrow white fringes the tertials were completely unmarked. When the birds preened their white rumps (extending as a "V" up the back) could be clearly seen. Preening also exposed the pattern of the tail feathers. Their bills were very long, approximately twice the length of the head, dark brown with a slight greenish tinge towards the base. The legs were relatively shorter than in Lesser Yellowlegs and a dull gray-green in color. The birds fed in shallow water and mud with a very rapid "sewing-machine" action of their long bills.

The call was heard 4 or 5 times - a sharp single or double "keek" unlike the "tw-tw-tw" of a Short-billed Dowitcher.

The birds were observed for c45 minutes at a range of 40 yards through x10 binocular and x30 and x60 spotting scopes in excellent late afternoon light.

I have seen numerous Long-billed Dowitchers, mainly in CA, with smaller numbers in AZ; PA; NY; DE and Britain (2).

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

Date of Sighting: 21 September 1996 to 21 September 1996

Location: PYMATUNING - MILLERS POND

County: CRAWFORD

Observer(s): Ed Kwater

Date of Submission: 1996

Submitted by: Ed Kwater

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

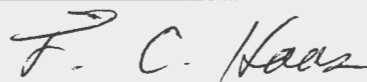
Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater								X
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
S. Feldstein			X					
TOTALS			6					1
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

8-16-97