

RARE SPECIES DOCUMENTATION Records of Vermont Birds

The following form has been prepared to encourage full documentation, when requested, of rare or unseasonal birds in the state of Vermont. These reports are put into a permanent file and should be as detailed as possible. New reports are reviewed annually by the Vermont Bird Records Committee, which evaluates records for their acceptability to future researchers and for inclusion in the state bird list.

Please print or type

SPECIES: Long-billed Dowitcher

NUMBER OBSERVED: 2 but they were with 2 other Long-billed/Short-billed Dowitchers

OBSERVER MAKING REPORT: OTHER OBSERVERS (and addresses if available) Jim Mead
798 Metcalf Drive, Williston, VT 05495

LOCATION: (place, township, county) Goose Bay while viewing from Shipyard Road in Highgate Springs, Franklin County

DATE: October 9, 2016

TIME AND LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: I saw these birds at 8:17 a.m. and observed them for about 20 minutes.

DISTANCES FROM BIRD: Maximum 200 yds. Minimum 200 yds.

WEATHER:

wind direction NNW wind speed 5-8 mph

sky cover- complete cloud cover light in relation to observer's position- The sun was behind me but the was shielded by the clouds. temperature- 56- 58 degrees F. I actually had great visibility while viewing these birds.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: (make, power, etc.) Iowa TSN-884 Promiser 20-60 power lens.

OBSERVER'S PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH THIS SPECIES OR SIMILAR FORMS:

I have seen this species several times in VT and also in Florida.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION: Photo _____ Tape Recording _____ Specimen _____

If yes to the above, where is this information deposited? _____

HABITAT: (be as detailed as possible, include associated bird species) They were on the closest shoreline to Shipyard Road which is part of a peninsula of land sticking out into Goose Bay from the South edge of the bay. The lake level is very low this year, providing great habitat (a lot of mudflats) for many shorebird species.

BIRD'S BEHAVIOR: (feeding actions, manner of flight, displays or interactions, reaction to observer) I saw these birds fly in and land among a few Lesser Yellowlegs. They simply started probing in a sewing machine style then preened and fed some more.

VOCALIZATION: (song or calls) I did not hear them vocalize.

DESCRIPTION: (Describe what you actually saw during the observation. We hope that observers will take field notes during the observation and before consulting field guides, etc. Additional pages with sketches and copies of field notes are encouraged.)

Relative size and shape: Stocky, bulky looking body sort of well rounded especially compared to the Lesser Yellowlegs next to them. They were shorter but much bigger than the Yellowlegs as well.

Head (crown, cheeks, eye, throat, nape): Grayish sort of brownish colored head and neck.

Feet and Bill (shape, color, length): Greenish/yellowish colored legs and very long dark straight bill.

Upper back: Darkish sort of brown colored. Fairly level while probing all the way down and a slight rise in the central area of their back (not completely flat across the top while probing).

Lower back and rump: I could clearly see a long white strip that went from the tail, through the rump and ended with a tapered tip near the upper back.

Wings (shape, length, markings): In flight they looked darkish with light colored secondaries. At rest the scapulars looked dark with obvious rusty colored edges (thus indicating juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher). I also looked at the tertials and found no markings within them.

Breast, belly, flanks, undertail coverts: Breast were lighter colored than heads and necks. Belly & undertail coverts were whitish. Flanks were sort of beige looking.

Tail (shape, length, markings): In flight I saw black & white tail bands that appeared to be of similar width.

IMPORTANT: WHAT SIMILAR SPECIES WERE ELIMINATED WHEN MAKING THIS IDENTIFICATION AND HOW WAS THIS BIRD DIFFERENT?

The only other species that would be difficult to separate this one from would be Short-billed Dowitcher. Had I not seen the rusty colored edges to the scapulars and no internal markings on the tertials, I would not have been able to rule out Short-billed Dowitcher. A juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher would have shown more buffy sort of golden colored scapular & tertial edges and there would have been buffy sort of golden colored internal bars in the tertials. Also, if I hadn't seen the rusty colored edges I would not have been able to determine these birds ages and would have let them go as Long-billed/Short-billed Dowitchers (like I did with the other two that they were with).

COMMENTS: (was age or sex determined?, etc.) Yes, they were both juveniles.

This report was written from notes taken during _____ immediately after ___x___ the observation, or written from memory _____ (please attach copies of notes if available)

NAME (print) Jim Mead SIGNATURE (not req'd) _____

MAILING ADDRESS 798 Metcalf Drive, Williston, VT 05495

DATE October 10, 2016

Return electronically (preferred) to: vbrc@vtcostudies.org or mail to: Vermont Bird Records Committee, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT 05055

