

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the LBRC Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or this format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to: LBRC Secretary, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. ENGLISH AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES:

Ruff (Philomachus pugnax)

2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, SEXES, AGES, GENERAL PLUMAGE (e.g., 2 ad. in breeding plumage):

One female in basic plumage.

3. LOCALITY: LOUISIANA; Acadia Par.,  
(state) (parish)

about 3 mi. south of south edge of Crowley, 1 mi. W of Hwy. 13  
(specific locality)

4. DATE(S) WHEN SEEN: 17 December 1992

5. TIMES OF DAY WHEN SEEN: about 09:00

6. REPORTING OBSERVER AND ADDRESS: Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff  
LSU Museum of Natural Science  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

7. OTHER OBSERVERS ACCOMPANYING REPORTER WHO ALSO IDENTIFIED THE BIRD:

None.

8. OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD:

None to our knowledge.

9. WEATHER/LIGHT CONDITIONS (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

Cold, moderate north wind, partly cloudy. Bird seen to NW of us with sun directly at our backs, mostly in full sun except when low, scudding clouds would move by.

10. OPTICAL EQUIPMENT (type, power, condition):

Leitz 8 X 40 (DLD) and Bushnell Custom 10 X 50 (SWC) binoculars in good condition, and 15-60X Balscope in good condition.

11. DISTANCE TO BIRD: 100-300 m

12. DURATION OF OBSERVATION: 5-10 minutes.
13. HABITAT: partially flooded, muddy, rice stubble field.
14. BEHAVIOR OF BIRD/CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION (flying, feeding, resting, etc. - include and stress any habits used in identification; relate events surrounding the observation):

Bird with concentration of about 10,000 mixed shorebirds (mainly Long-billed Dowitcher, Dunlin, and Western Sandpiper) in a section of flooded fields bordering the east side of the first parallel parish road to the west of Hwy. 13. We walked out into the fields on levees to get the shorebirds in better light. After about 10 minutes, DLD spotted the Ruff about 100 m away feeding with other shorebirds in shallow water with scattered mud-clods. We watched the bird for several minutes until the flock flushed, at which point we followed the bird in flight as it moved away and to our right. We momentarily lost the bird as the flock swirled low over the fields, but quickly relocated it when the flock settled about 200-300 m away. The nervous shorebirds would all flush and redistribute themselves every few minutes, and we quickly lost track of the bird again. Eventually, DLD relocated the Ruff about 100-150 m away feeding with a pure sub-flock of dowitchers, and we watched it off and on for several more minutes before moving on to continue covering our area on the Crowley CBC. The bird was constantly foraging, picking at, or making shallow probes into, the surface of the water or mud, moving slowly and deliberately forward at all times, occasionally changing directions (feeding behavior very similar to Lesser Yellowlegs). There was nothing remarkable about the bird's flight behavior.

15. DESCRIPTION (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length or relative size compared to other species present or familiar species; body bulk, shape, and proportions; bill, eye, leg and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

A distinctive shorebird noticeably larger in size than Dunlin and slightly smaller than Long-billed Dowitcher (direct comparisons). Rather awkward build with short, plump, rounded body shape, medium-long neck and small, rounded head, medium-length legs (relatively longer than dowitcher but not as long as yellowlegs- but no comparisons with latter), and relatively long wings and short tail (tips of folded wings extending beyond end of tail). Eye and bill appeared all dark at a distance; legs were definitely grayish-green. Head and upperparts generally grayish-brown with an obscure dull white area between eye and base of bill, and with a scaly look to the back (back and scapular feathers with blackish centers and grayish-white fringes). Underparts generally dull white with obscure dark spotting on the sides of the breast. In flight, remiges and rectrices blackish or dark brown, and most of uppertail coverts and sides of rump white (except for dark stripe down center of uppertail coverts connecting the darker back and tail), giving the appearance of a broken, upside-down white "U" around the base of the tail. Feet extended slightly beyond tail in flight. Bill length about equal to head length, with slight droop.

16. VOICE: not heard
17. SIMILAR SPECIES (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

Unique combination of size, proportions, leg color, bill shape, and head, back, and rump plumage patterns eliminate all other species of shorebird. Size indicates a female - males would be somewhat larger, approaching size of Greater Yellowlegs.

18. PHOTOGRAPHS OR TAPE RECORDINGS OBTAINED (By whom? Attached?): none.

19. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES:

Each of us has seen at least 10 female-plumaged individuals combined in CA, LA, or AK.

20. IDENTIFICATION AIDS (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a) at time of observation: none.

b) after observation: none.

21. THIS DESCRIPTION WRITTEN FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ notes made during observation;  X  notes made after observation (date: 12-17-92, 7 PM );  X  memory.

22. ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION?  YES . If not, explain:

23. SIGNATURE OF REPORTER:

*Steven W. Cardiff* *Donna L. DeBnam*

24. DATE AND TIME OF WRITING THIS ACCOUNT: 5 January 1993.

Radio tower  
Radio tower  
Radio tower

white around bill  
each feather's "swath"  
black centers  
w/ grayish-white  
edges



short  
slightly  
curved  
bill

Spotted  
sides of  
breast  
underparts  
mostly  
white

legs  
grayish green

Slightly smaller than LBDO.  
noticeably larger than Dunlin  
both in direct comparison

5

in flight



"U"  
pattern  
of uppertail prominent