

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE  
REPORT FORM

1. **Common and scientific name:** Curlew Sandpiper (*Caladris ferruginea*)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 bird in adult transitional plumage, molting from alternate to basic plumage
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Vermilion  
  
**Exact Location:** Hwy 14; .5 mile west of Hwy 709 between Kaplan and Gueydan. In Field south of Hwy. 14.
4. **Date(s) seen:** August 17, 1997
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 12:45-1:30 pm and 3:15-3:30 pm
6. **Reporting observer and address:** Phillip Wallace  
4515 S. Prieur St.  
New Orleans, LA 70125-5044
7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:**  
Mac Myers discovered and identified the bird.
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:** Mike Musemeche saw the bird on Aug. 18.
9. **Light conditions:** Good light; partly cloudy to sunny.
10. **Optical equipment:** Bushnell Spacemaster 22x
11. **Distance to the bird:** 60-200 yards
12. **Duration of observation:** 45 minutes and 15 minutes
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** Fallow fields with some grass and much dried mud; some water in ditches in the field.
14. **Behavior:** Feeding and flying.
15. **Description:**  
*Size* 1.5 to 2 times the size of adjacent peeps (Semipalms and Westerns). Slightly less bulky than adjacent Killdeer. Shorter legs than adjacent Stilt Sandpiper.  
*Bill* All dark; length 1.5 times distance from nape to bill base; decurved; distal one-quarter of the bill was very fine.

*Legs* All dark.

*Side of Face* Pale with a pale supercilium.

*Throat and Upper Breast* Pale; off-white

*Midbreast to Belly* Deep reddish-cinnamon, paler peripherally; paler cinnamon extended up onto the sides of the neck.

*Lower Belly to Vent* Whitish; some dark spots or streaks on the undertail coverts.

*Rump* In flight it showed an all-white rump.

**16. Voice:** None

**17. Similar species and how they were eliminated:** Bill shape and reddish on the underparts eliminate all other species. Rump pattern further separates it from Dunlin. Stilt Sandpiper further separated by leg length and color in side-by-side comparison.

**18. Photographs?** Slides by Wallace accompany this report. Myers also has slides.

**19. Previous experience with this species:** None

**20. Aids used in identification:**

a) **at time of observation:** NGS Guide

b) **after observation:** Shorebirds, Marchant and Prater; Kaufman, "Curlew Sandpiper and its I.D. Contenders," American Birds, Vol. 44, No. 2.

**21. This description written from:**   x   notes made during observation;  
           notes made after observation;            from memory.

**22. Signature of reporter:**

*Chilly Wallace*

**23. Date and time of writing this account:** November 26, 1997  
9:00 pm

Notes written  
at site.

Sticks  
(disturb)

May 14 - 1/2 mile west of Hwy 209  
between Keyler and Gwynn  
Mac Myers - discovered  
Phillip Wallace

Curlew Sandpiper  
8/17/97

Distance  
12:45 - 1:30 60yd -  
200yds.

Plumage - Ad. molting from breeding  
to winter plumage. Light -  
good. P.C. to sunny.

Size - 1/2 - 2 times size of adjacent peeps (semi/west);  
slightly less bulk than adjacent Killdeer;  
shorter legs than adj. Silt Sandpiper

Bill - all dark; 1 1/2 x length of head;  
decurved; very fine distal 1/4 of bill

Legs - all dark

Throat and upper breast - pale; off white

Mid breast to belly - deep reddish-cinnamon;  
paler peripherally; paler cinnamon extended  
up onto the sides to the neck.

Side of face - pale; pale supercilium.

Rump - in flight showed all white  
rump

Lower belly to vent - whitish; some dark  
spots (streaks?) on undertail coverts.

Mac tied pink fluorescent dye  
to bush to mark spot.

No vocalization

Habitat - Lakow fields; some grass;  
loved mud; some "streams"

3:15-3:30

Second sighting

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REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 Adult molting from alternate to basic
3. Locality: Louisiana: Vermilion Parish: Hwy 14  
.3 mi. W of Hwy 709 (west of Hwy 13)
4. Date(s) when seen: 17 Aug, 1997
5. Times of day when seen: 12:45 PM, 3:15 P.M.
6. Reporting observer and address:  
B. Mac-Myers III 105 MacClung St. Pass Christian, MS 39571
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:  
Philip Wallace
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:  
1 heard that M. Musmacher relocated the bird a day or two later.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): generally good to very good
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10x40 Zeiss; 22x60 Bushnell  
good to excellent
11. Distance to bird: originally 200-250 yards; later ~ 60 yards
12. Duration of observation: 45 minutes?
13. Habitat (general and specific):  
Rice field with narrow channels or ditches that were wet -  
rest dry
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):  
See attached notes.
15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):  
See attached notes made from notes taken in the  
field

16. Voice: not heard

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

The combination of size, shape, dark legs, wing stripe, curved bill, white rump band, bill length/shape, and remains of breeding/alternate plumage should eliminate all others

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

7 slides by B. Mac Myers attached.

19. Previous experience with this species:

1 only  
Wide experience with confusion candidates - Stilt Sandpiper, Dunlin, et.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) at time of observation; ?

b) after observation: Many including Paulson, Hayman et al, Rusak + Cottrell

21. This description written from: X notes made during observation; \_\_\_\_\_ notes made after observation; \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? Yes. If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter: B. Mac Myers III

24. Date and time of writing this account:

14 Dec. 1997

4 PM

## Curlew Sandpiper

17 August 1997 w/ Phillip Wallace  
 Vermilion Parish; south side of highway<sup>14</sup> ~ .3 mi.  
 west of hwy 709 (west of Hwy 13)

12:45 p.m.

200-250 yards out in field, light pretty good.

Partial breeding plumage. Bill long (maybe 1.5x head), thin, black, well decurved. Upperparts generally light gray, including crown. Rather plain face, slightly lighter supercilium. Throat, chin, upper breast whitish. Some pinkish-pale cinnamon at sides of breast and neck. Lower breast deep cinnamon-chestnut. Belly and undertail coverts pale gray but with a few dark spots in undertail coverts.

Also, a few of the scapulars had dark centers. The legs were dark/blackish - direct comparison with Stilt Sandpiper and its greenish legs. When bird jumped and flapped and also when it flew, it showed an even white rump band - similar size + shape to White rumped. In flight showed moderate white wing stripes.

Walked into field within 60 yards, direct comparison with Lesser Yellowlegs, Killdeer, Western Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher.

Bird mostly fed in wet mud around edges of water. Typically would bend over, probe, then half straighten up then bend over and probe again; repeat one or two more times, then walk. Probing appeared to be more or less in line perpendicular to direction the bird was facing

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Curlew Sandpiper 17 Aug. 97 (cont'd.)

Waded into water to attempt to feed, but was chased by Stilt Sandpipers. The wet areas were localized along narrow "ditches", with wide areas that were dry and somewhat grassy in between. The bird walked between these wet areas (50+ yards) several times rather than fly. It flew normally. Stayed with it? 45 minutes? We relocated the bird around 3:15 pm.

I was struck by the bird's unique shape (as I was by the only other one I have seen). Fairly tall, fairly long legs but not as leggy as Stilt S. A beautifully proportioned bird, elegant. Head smoothly rounded, rather thin, evenly curved, fine-tipped bill probably contributed to this appearance.