

**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM**

1. **Common and scientific name:** Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 adult male in pre-basic molt
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Jefferson
Exact Location: Grand Isle - Exxon
4. **Date(s) seen:** August 5, 2001
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 1:00 - 1:25 p.m.
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, Dan Purrington
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:** Lee Ellis reported on LABIRD that he saw the bird on August 6.
9. **Light conditions:** Good
10. **Optical equipment:** 10 x 40 Zeiss bins; Kowa Scope
11. **Distance to the bird:** 15 - 75 yds
12. **Duration of observation:** 25 minutes
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** Short grass field
14. **Behavior:** Feeding in close proximity to dowitchers and Killdeer. Flying.
15. **Description:**
Size and General Impression Medium-sized shorebird. Initially estimated to be about the size (bulk) of a Lesser Yellowlegs or a large Pectoral Sandpiper. Later in a side-by-side comparison was judged to be about twice the bulk of a Killdeer.
Head The head seemed too small for the bill and body. Basically pale brown in color. There was a black patch on the back of the head or the upper nape. The sides of the face were paler than the rest of the head, except for the whitish feathering at the base of the bill.

Upper Parts The upper parts were brownish-gray, but the large, flared black-centered scapulars made it difficult to judge the basic coloration of the back. The bird had a hunch-backed appearance accentuated by the scapulars sticking up.

Wings The bird appeared exceptionally long-winged in flight. It was missing some of the inner primaries/outer secondaries in the right wing.

Underparts The belly and undertail coverts were white. The upper breast was grayish and scaly in appearance. There were bold black splotches on the upper flanks and breast. Upon closer inspection it was clear that the splotches on the breast were individual, large black feathers left over from alternate plumage.

Tail Although the tail itself was not noted, there was a large amount of white in the uppertail coverts conspicuous in flight.

Bill The bill was of medium length, appearing slightly longer than the length of the head. The bill was decurved and thin at the tip. The bill was two-toned, with the distal two-thirds dark and the proximal one-third dull orange-red.

Eye Not noted.

Legs The legs were bright orange. The leg length relative to the body bulk seemed somewhere between that of a Pectoral and a Lesser Yellowlegs, but closer to that of the yellowlegs.

Other The neck appeared long, much longer than a Pectoral, for example, when the bird was alert.

16. Voice: None

17. Similar species and how they were eliminated: The large size of this male eliminated Pectoral, as did the leg color, breast pattern, and large, fluffy scaps. The remnants of alternate plumage on the breast made the ID fairly straightforward.

18. Photographs? One slide by Wallace accompanies this report. Photos were also taken by Myers and Purrington. I have 3 more slides of poor quality and several shots in my camera that have not been developed. All are available if needed. The photos by Purrington and Myers leave no doubt as to the ID.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen twice before in Louisiana.

20. Aids used in identification:

a) at time of observation: Hayman, Shorebirds

b) after observation: Paulson, Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest

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

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes

23. Signature of reporter:

Cheryl Wallace

24. Date and time of writing this account: August 28, 2001

Edron

photos

Ruff ♂
8/5/01

1:00 - 1:25

molting out of molt: planning to
basic

Size - LEYE or big PESA

15 yds closest

Bright orange legs.

Bold black splotches on upper flanks, breast;

Decurved bill, thin at tip

Black on back of head, upper nape.

Long black feathers on lower breast.

2-toned bill - distal 2/3 dark,
proximal 1/3 dull orange-red

White feathers at base of bill.

Head-backed appearance accentuated by
scaps sticking up.

Pale sides of face; long neck when
alert

Upper parts brownish

Long-winged in flight; inner primary/outer
secondaries missing in right wing.

next to KILL; 2 twice the bulk.
Much white on upper part in flight

Upper breast - greyish, scaly

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1. **COMMON AND SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Ruff

2. **AGE, SEX, NUMBER, GENERAL PLUMAGE(S):** one male, probably adult fading from alternate plumage (?)

3. **LOCALITY:** Exxon fields, Grand Isle

PARISH: Jefferson

4. **DATE AND TIME OF OBSERVATION:** 5 August 2001, 1-1:25 p.m. CDT

5. **REPORTING OBSERVER AND ADDRESS:**

Robert D. Purrington, 4700 Bissonet Dr., Metairie, LA 70003

6. **OTHER OBSERVERS ACCOMPANYING REPORTER WHO IDENTIFIED THE BIRD(S):** Mac Myers, Phillip Wallace

7. **OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD(S):**

8. **LIGHT CONDITIONS (RELATIVE TO OBSERVER):** clear skies, light almost behind the observers

9. **OPTICAL EQUIPMENT:** 10x42 Zeiss binoculars 30X telescope

10. **DISTANCE TO BIRD:** 10-30 meters

11. **DURATION OF OBSERVATION:** 25 minutes

12. **HABITAT:** wet short-grass field

13. **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVATION; BEHAVIOR:** We spotted the bird in a swale in the short-grass Exxon fields, feeding by itself, although there were dowitchers and other shorebirds in the vicinity. We observed the bird from as close as 30-40 ft for 25 minutes, circling the bird in the automobile, photographing from the car, flushing the bird several times, eventually setting up scopes for a detailed look.

14. **DESCRIPTION OF BIRD:** Medium-sized shorebird--between Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs in size, small headed, with a distinct hump-backed look due to fluffed tertial (?)

feathers. Back feathering quite dark, underparts white except very heavy black blotching on flanks and to a lesser extent on belly. Bill medium length (1-1/2"?), slightly decurved, bill nearly black with lighter base (horn colored proximal 1/3), white feathering at base of bill. Legs a bubble-gum color. Nape quite dark, back of neck dusky and carrying on to sides of neck which were faintly speckled. Tail dark through center with bold, long white patches on either side. Wings in molt with a feather or two missing from primary-secondary interface, at least on right wing. An irregular white edgin to secondary and primary coverts produced an off-white wing stripe or flash in the wings when in flight.

15. **VOCALIZATION(S), IF ANY:** none , of course!

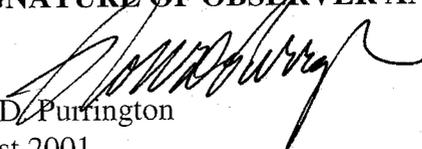
16. **SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED:** Unmistakeable, but distinguished by blotched flanks and belly, pale feathering at base of bill, small headed look, tail pattern. See photos, in any case.

17. **RESOURCES USED IN IDENTIFICATION (FIELD GUIDES, ETC.):** none, initially, then Sibley in an attempt to confirm sex/age.

18. **PHOTOGRAPHY, IF ANY (BY WHOM):** At least three rolls of film, by myself, Myers, and Wallace.

19. **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES:** Twice in New Orleans, several times in England.

20. **SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER AND DATE:**


Robert D. Purrington
6 August 2001



5 Aug 01

Grand Isle, Jefferson Parish, LA

B. mac. Mycis



5 Aug 01
Grand Isle Jefferson Parish, LA B. Mac. Myers



5 Aug 01
Grand Isle Jefferson Parish, LA

B. Mac. Myers



5 Aug. 01

Grand Isle Jefferson Parish, LA

B. Mac. Myers III



5 Aug. 01
Grand Isle
B. Mac. Myers III Jefferson Parish, LA



Ruff

Grand Isle, LA

August 5, 2001

Phillip Walcott



Ruff
Grand Isle, LA
August 5, 2001
Phillip Wallace



Ruft

Grand Isle, LA

August 5, 2001

Phillip Wallace



Ruff 5 Aug. 01 at Grand Isle, LA

B. Mac Myers 320 SHARON DR., NEW ORLEANS, LA 70124



Roff 5 Aug. 01 at Grand Isle, LA

B. Mac Myers 320 SHARON DR., NEW ORLEANS, LA 70124