

**LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

Oscar Johnson
9851 Jefferson Highway #H13
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
ojohns7@tigers.lsu.edu

Species: Ruff, *Calidris pugnax*

Location: Crowley wastewater treatment plant, Acadia Parish, Louisiana

Date: 1 October 2014

Age and sex: One juvenile, possibly female. One adult in basic plumage.

Molt status: None

Number of individuals: Two

Other observers: Matt Brady, Ryan Terrill, Mac Myers

Original observer: Unsure who first found the adult. I found the juvenile.

Circumstances: Matt, Ryan, and I met up with Mac at the Crowley WTP to look for a Ruff and a possible stint found the previous day by Matt, Ryan, and Van Remsen. The birds had been present on one of the rocky southern ponds, and we set about looking for both birds. I soon found a Ruff feeding among some yellowlegs and everyone was able to get on it. There was some confusion about this, but we eventually realized that this was a green-legged juvenile and a different bird than the orange-legged adult found the previous day. We got multiple photos of the juvenile bird and attempted to collect it, but failed. Someone re-found the adult bird soon after, but it stayed fairly distant and we were only able to get a few poor photos of it on this date. Ryan got better photos of the adult on 30 September 2014. Both birds were in excellent light, with the juvenile getting as close as 10 meters away, while the adult stayed closer to 80-100 meters away. We were viewing the birds through our various spotting scopes.

In summary, the adult was seen 30 September – 1 October, while the juvenile was seen only on 1 October. Both were photographed.

Description: Both birds were medium sized, long-legged shorebirds, intermediate in size between nearby Dunlin and Lesser Yellowlegs, but with shorter legs than the yellowlegs. Both birds had a fairly thin, slightly decurving bill, recalling a shortened version of a Dunlin bill. Both had a distinctive stocky body, short neck, and long-winged look that immediately set them apart from other shorebird species. The juvenile was colored a rich buff overall, fading to whitish on the lower belly. The mantle, scapulars, and wing coverts were dark brown and narrowly fringed with buff. The tail was dark and in flight there was a distinctive “U” shaped white rump band. The bill was dark and the legs were a dirty greenish color. The adult bird was considerably more grayish overall, and almost pure white on the belly. The chest was washed grayish-brown and the mantle feathers were a medium gray with an indistinct darker gray center. The head and neck were

grayish, but the face was somewhat whitish. The bill was dark, but had a reddish wash to the base. The legs were bright orange. I was unable to see the rump and tail pattern.

Discussion: This is a very distinctively marked shorebird, without any species with which it is easily confused. The adult could maybe be confused with a yellowlegs or a redshank, but the leg color is wrong for both, as is the overall structure. Other mid-sized shorebirds (Pectoral, Sharp-tailed, Baird's, White-rumped, Dunlin, etc) have either different rump patterns, different leg color, and different overall plumage pattern. All have very different structure.











