

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, 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 in alternate plumage):
One, apparent female in nonbreeding plumage
3. Locality: Parish: Jefferson Davis
Specific Locality: 0.8 mi SSW jct LA-14 x LA-99
4. Date(s) when observed: 22 December 2015
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 1120-1200 CST
6. Reporting observer and address: Robert C. Dobbs, Lafayette, LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Mac Myers and Dave Patton
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Steve Cardiff and Donna Dittmann (originally discovered bird 18 December 2015)
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Even/soft, but relatively low, light of overcast sky
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Pentax PF80-ED spotting scope (good condition), Swarovski 8x30 binos (good condition)
11. Distance to bird(s): 200-250 m
12. Duration of observation: 40 min
13. Habitat: partially-flooded field w/ shallow water and exposed mud

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Primarily foraging, often in vicinity of Greater and Lesser yellowlegs and Stilt Sandpipers; also, briefly preening

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

Medium-sized shorebird, more-or-less similar in size to Lesser Yellowlegs, distinctly smaller than Greater Yellowlegs, and larger than Stilt Sandpiper (direct comparisons).

Distinctive shape/structure – long legs, round/chunky body (rounder than yellowlegs, STSA) with long, but thick neck, and small head.

Legs yellowish. Bill all black, medium-short in length, deeper at base than yellowlegs or STSA, and very slightly drooped; bill structure and proportion to head/body reminiscent of Pectoral Sandpiper.

Plumage – Head pale grayish with whitish area at base of bill; breast pale grayish with faint darker smudging on sides; belly and vent white; upperparts contrasty, with dark/sooty gray upperwing coverts/scapulars broadly edged with pale gray (with buff tones?). White “U” on rump visible in flight.

16. Voice: Not known to vocalize during obs

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Other medium-sized shorebirds with long, yellowish legs potentially confusing. Ruff's larger size and shorter bill eliminates Stilt Sandpiper (direct comparison); Ruff's larger size and complete lack of streaking on the breast eliminate Pectoral and Sharp-tailed sandpipers. Ruff's body structure very distinctive, immediately recognizable, and very different than Greater and Lesser yellowlegs (direct comparison), as well as other potential candidate species. Ruff's bill – med-short length and deeper, slightly drooped shape/structure – also eliminates Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, etc. Ruff's plain face with dark postocular stripe, clean lores, and whitish area at base of bill, and wide, pale edging on upperparts also eliminate Greater and Lesser yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpiper. Ruff's lack of buff-colored body plumage and its white “U” on rump in flight eliminate Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): I failed to get diagnostic, or even recognizable, photos due to distance and fog. Dave Patton successfully photographed the bird two days later, 24 December 2015.

19. Previous experience with this species: Very little (1994, Arkansas), but I immediately recognized the bird's distinctive shape/structure

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: None

b. after observation: The Shorebird Guide (O'Brien et al.)

21. This description is written from: notes made during the observation (notes attached?); notes made after the observation (date: 23 Dec 2015); memory.

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

23. Date: 2 January 2016 Time: 1245 CST

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? Yes _____

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes _____

[Return to LBRC Page](#)