

RECORD #: 3-B-06

IDAHO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

SPECIES:

Whimbrel

REPORTER:

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OTHER OBSERVERS:

Cliff Weiss
Jay Carlisle
Several people on Jay's banding staff.
Several staffers from the refuge.
Jay and Jenny Ricks

DATE REPORT PREPARED:

5/5/06

DATE SIGHTING OCCURRED:

5/5/06

LOCALITY OF OBSERVATION:

Camas NWR, 30 north of Idaho Falls, ID.
1.0 mile south of refuge parking lot on the main marsh, then looking due west about 300 yds to the edge of the flooded field.

HABITAT:

Grassy field, flooded.

CONDITIONS:

Clear and calm, about 65 degrees.
Used Zeiss Diascope 85 with 20-60 zoom eyepiece, other observers had Swarovski 65's.
Sun was to the ssw (over our shoulders)

DID YOU TAKE NOTES?:

during the observation?

DID YOU CONSULT FIELD GUIDE OR OTHER REFERENCES?:

during the observation?

WHAT GUIDE(S) OR REFERENCE(S) DID YOU CONSULT?:

NGS 3rd edition.
Shorebirds of Pacific NW, Paulsen, 1993 (at home)

DESCRIPTION:

Clearly a shorebird, size between a mallard and yellow headed blackbird, both of which were in the same field of view when the bird was first seen. Long decurved bill, but still much shorter than the nearby LB curlews. Distinct striped pattern on head. Body a nondescript brownish color. Legs not seen.

BEHAVIOR:

Feeding, standing, walking. Not seen flying. No vocalization heard. Was near curlews, willets, ducks, and Canada Geese all in the same flooded field. No noticeable interaction with other birds. The 2 whimbrels did not interact much with each other; sometimes they fed near each other, other times they were apart, but never more than about 20 yards.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU POSITIVELY IDENTIFY THE BIRD, AND WHAT CLINCHED THE IDENTIFICATION FOR YOU?

Positive ID made almost immediately. I had been looking at LB curlews as I drove along the dike road, stopping to observe several. The possibility of seeing a whimbrel was in my mind. I've seen enough LB curlews with relatively short bills and stronger than average head pattern, to know that one can be fooled, but the head pattern on the whimbrels was distinctive and obvious. The ID was clinched when I consulted the NGS guide and checked the size of whimbrel and curlew. The curlew is as large as the nearby mallard, my bird was noticeably smaller

HOW DID YOU ELIMINATE SIMILAR SPECIES, AND WHAT WERE THEY?

The only bird likely to be confused is a LB curlew. The head pattern is distinctive on the whimbrel. Several curlews were in the field, and some were in the same field of view at times, making comparison straight forward. Some curlews can have bills almost as short as the whimbrel, but the head pattern and size ruled out curlews.

EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES (AND SIMILAR SPECIES):

Have seen this species several times in California.

GENERAL BIRDING EXPERIENCE:

Serious birder for the past 11 years.

WERE PHOTO(S), VIDEO, AND/OR AUDIO OBTAINED BY YOU?:

Photo