

## SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER IN SANTA BARBARA

On 13 September 1969 Richard Webster and I observed an immature Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Erolia acuminata*) in the salicornia marsh at Goleta Slough, Santa Barbara County, California. The bird remained in the area until 21 September 1969; during this period it was well observed by many others including Bruce Broadbooks, Ralph G. Mancke, Lawrence Sansone III, Jay M. Sheppard, and G. Shumway Sufel. The following description is, for the most part, taken from my notes which I made shortly after the time of observation:

Upperparts: crown and forehead dark, bright rusty, streaked with fine black lines; rest of upperparts more reddish than the upperparts of Pectoral Sandpipers (*Erolia melanotos*). Back streaked, feathers rusty brown edged with a paler cinnamon color. Rump and tail dark in coloration, like that of the Pectoral Sandpiper. Cheeks dusky cinnamon. Underparts: throat whitish, not sharply defined; throat coloration blends into the uniform, pale cinnamon of the upper breast. Dusky breast streaking very faint, entirely restricted to the sides of the breast (lack of strong breast streaking is distinctly different from the heavy, regular streakings of most Pectoral Sandpipers). No abrupt border between the cinnamon colored upper breast and the whitish lower breast and belly (strikingly different from Pectoral Sandpipers, which nearly always have a sharp line of division between the breast and belly colorations). Undertail coverts whitish; short dusky or blackish streaks on the undertail coverts may be diagnostic of the species, but these dusky markings may not always be visible in the field. Wing: slightly more brownish and less cinnamon than back; in flight there is no wing stripe. Soft parts: eye dark; blackish bill relatively thin and straight; legs yellowish-green. Size: approximately the same size as a Pectoral Sandpiper; posture erect and alert. Wing beat like that of the Pectoral Sandpiper.

This appears to be the fifth completely satisfactory record of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in California. The species breeds in northern Siberia, and winters south to Australia and New Zealand. Although its primary migration route is through eastern Siberia and along the Pacific coast of Asia, North American records indicate that it is also a more or less regular fall straggler on the coast as far south as Washington. Farther south, however, the species is increasingly rare and can probably be considered no more than an irregular or casual visitant to California. *Jon L. Atwood, 511 Santa Maria, Arcadia, California 91006.*

[The species is a common late summer and fall visitor to the west coast of Alaska (Gabrielson and Lincoln, *The Birds of Alaska*, p. 372, 1959). It becomes a scarce autumn transient on the coast of British Columbia (Godfrey, *The Birds of Canada*, p. 152, 1966) and is recorded irregularly, possibly regularly, on the coast of Washington (Alan Baldrige, pers. comm.). Further south it appears to be casual to accidental.

In California, prior to 1969, there are only four fully substantiated records:

1. Olema, Marin County, 27 November 1870 (specimen #1170, Peabody Museum, checked by Grinnell and Miller).

## NOTES

2. Mission Bay, San Diego County, 16 September 1921 (specimen #2255, San Diego Natural History Museum, seen by Grinnell and by the eds., labeled 15 September 1921).

3. Oakland, Alameda County, 10 to 26 October 1959, bird seen by numerous observers including GMcC; full description in GMcC's notes.

4. Abbott's Lagoon, Marin County, 3 September 1968, bird observed and described by John Smail (description on file, California Birds).

In 1969, in addition to the fully documented records above, there were the following acceptable records:

1. A bird at Bodega Bay, Sonoma County, found by Laurence C. Binford and Charles T. Clark on 13 October; an individual, possibly the same, banded and photographed there on 3 November by Marianne Shepard (color photograph on file, Point Reyes Bird Observatory and California Birds).

2. Four to six immatures observed in the Humboldt Bay region between 16 and 30 October. Three birds were found on 16 October by Ron H. Gerstenberg, Stanley W. Harris, and Kim Burton, one of which was collected by SWH; the other two were seen by several observers on 17 October. On 24 and 30 October three were seen one mile east of the first area by RHG, and one collected on the latter date. Both specimens are deposited in the Humboldt State College collection. Information on these records was kindly provided by R. H. Gerstenberg.

The following records, published in Audubon Field Notes, cannot at present be accepted because they lack supporting details:

– near Woodland, Yolo County, 13 September 1960 (AFN 15:72, 1961); bird probably a Pectoral Sandpiper.

– Carlsbad, San Diego County, 7 October 1963 (AFN 18:74, 1964); possibly correct, but the eds. feel that the description does not completely exclude other species, such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tringytes ruficollis*).

– Limantour Estero, Marin County, 12 and 13 October 1966 (AFN 21:74, 1967); a number of observers saw this individual, but disagreed on its identification.

– Abbott's Lagoon, Marin County, 22 November 1966 (AFN 21:74, 1967); the eds. have not seen any supporting details.

– Bodega Bay, Marin County, 4 November 1969, "at least five" (AFN 24:91, 1970); no supporting details seen (one bird present there between 13 October and 3 November, and was fully documented – see above).

– Olema Marsh, Marin County, 4 November 1969, two seen (AFN 24:91, 1970); no supporting details seen.

All substantiated records from North America involve immature birds except for one reported by J. W. Taylor at Kivalina, Alaska (Wilson Bull. 81:337-8, 1969) – GMcC and PD]