

**FIRST RECORD OF LONG-TOED STINT IN OREGON**

JEFF GILLIGAN, 26 N.E. 32nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232

OWEN SCHMIDT, 3007 N.E. 32nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97212

HARRY NEHLS, 2736 S.E. 20th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97202

DAVID IRONS, 1535 S.E. Rhine, Portland, Oregon 97202

The Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*) breeds in northeast Asia and migrates through southeast Asia to India and Australia (King et al. 1978). In Alaska it is a rare spring and fall visitant to the western Aleutian Islands. There are spring records for the Pribilof Islands, St. Lawrence Island, and the Seward Peninsula (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

The first Long-toed Stint for North America outside of Alaska was photographed and tape recorded at the base of the South Jetty of the Columbia River, Clatsop County, Oregon, on 5 September 1981. On that day, Gilligan, Schmidt, Irons, Mike Houck, Jake Redlinger, and Mark Smith flushed a small *Calidris* from thick *Salicornia* near the tidal pools. When flushed, the bird rose rapidly and gave repeated calls that suggested a soft version of the familiar Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. melanotos*) call. Gilligan based his original identification as *C. subminuta* on the bird's small size, habitat choice, and calls. We had ample opportunity to confirm the identification during extraordinary views as close as 3 m for the next 4 hours. Other observers included Nehls, Richard Smith, Matt Hunter, Steve Heintz, Alan Contreras, Richard Palmer, David Hofmann, John Gatchet, Durrell Kapan, and many others. The bird was last seen on 12 September 1981. Final identification of the bird as a juvenile Long-toed Stint was based on its field marks, behavior, and voice.

*Field Marks.* The bird was larger and more chestnut colored than a typical juvenile Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*). The upperparts were mostly dark, with the crown feathers, scapulars, and tertials edged in bright chestnut. The dark crown extended to the bill and lores. There was a very conspicuous whitish "V" on the back, similar to that of juvenile Least Sandpiper. The wing coverts were rich brown and broadly edged in buff to whitish-buff; the tertials were dark with very noticeable bright chestnut fringes. The supercilium was nearly clear white, broadening over the eye and flaring onto the nape over a chestnut ear patch. The underparts were whitish with the breast smudged gray-brown and prominently streaked through the center.

The bill tapered to a fine point and was slightly decurved near the tip. The upper mandible and tip were black, but the base of the lower mandible was tan, which distinguishes the Long-toed Stint from other small *Calidris* sandpipers (Wallace 1974).

The legs were yellow, appearing brighter than a Least Sandpiper's. The toes appeared exceptionally long, the middle about as long as the tarsus, giving the bird a big-footed appearance as it walked on the flats. Prater et al. (1977) suggest that long toes may be a useful field mark. When the bird stood on one leg, the toes on the raised leg projected from the belly feathers, accenting their length.

*Behavior.* The Long-toed Stint seemed to run faster than the Least and Western Sandpipers (*C. mauri*) that were nearby, and it had an unusual forward-leaning posture. It took long, loping strides, quite unlike the more scurrying footsteps of the other species. When alarmed it erected its posture and craned its neck, giving it an elegant, tall, thin appearance. Kitson (1978) observes that this neck-stretching and generally elongated appearance are more typical of Long-toed Stint than of other small sandpipers. In our opinion, however, a Least Sandpiper can appear nearly equally upright, long-necked, and elongated when alarmed.

The most notable behavioral characteristic of the Long-toed Stint was its preference for cover. On several occasions it was flushed from the mudflats, flew back over the

## NOTES



Figure 1. The juvenile Long-toed Stint had a bright chestnut crown with its supercilium flaring behind the eye, chestnut ear coverts, streaked breast, very bright chestnut edges on the scapulars and tertials, and particularly long toes.

*Photo by Owen Schmidt*



Figure 2. The juvenile Long-toed Stint (right) is larger than the juvenile Least Sandpiper (left) and shows much brighter chestnut on the crown, ear coverts, and back, and also has longer and brighter yellow legs.

*Photo by Owen Schmidt*

## NOTES

observers, descended steeply, and disappeared into thick *Salicornia* taller than itself. This behavior was somewhat reminiscent of the manner in which a Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) plunges into vegetation. On one occasion a Least Sandpiper descended with the Long-toed Stint, but at the last instant, as the Long-toed Stint dropped into the vegetation, the Least Sandpiper hovered for a moment just above the vegetation and then rose again and flew off. On the flats the Long-toed Stint tended to remain close to grass and driftwood, often crouching in a depression near cover.

**Voice.** We noticed immediately that the Long-toed Stint's calls differed from those of the other small *Calidris* familiar to us. The bird usually called in sets of 2 or 3 notes as it flew. We interpreted the calls as dry, low-pitched, muted "preep," "pr-r-rp," or "treeet" notes. Several observers described the call as more of a 2-syllable "churr-up," "pr-r-up," or "tirr-et." One observer reported that the Long-toed Stint gave a weak, mellow "chert" call when flushed, similar to the Pectoral Sandpiper's sharper "cherk." Viet and Jonsson (1984) say the call is a softly rolling "chrrup," which is perhaps the same sound. The bird was silent except when flushed.

The Least Sandpiper's typical calls are a harsher, more shrill "kreeet" or "breeep." Since the sighting of the Long-toed Stint, Irons and Gilligan have on rare occasions heard Least Sandpipers give calls somewhat similar to those of the Long-toed Stint, but higher in pitch.

The calls of the Long-toed Stint were recorded on a cassette recorder with the aid of a parabolic reflector. A copy of the recording is filed with the Oregon Bird Records Committee, P.O. Box 10373, Eugene, OR 97440. The record has been accepted by the Oregon Bird Records Committee. Theodore Tobish, Dan Gibson, and Richard Veit have examined several of the photographs of the bird and agree with this identification.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Kessel, B. and Gibson, D., 1978. Status and distribution of Alaska birds. *Studies Avian Biol.* 1.
- King, B., Woodcock, M., and Dickinson, E., 1978. *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia.* Houghton-Mifflin, Boston.
- Kitson, A. 1978. Identification of Long-toed Stint, Pintail Snipe and Asiatic Dowitcher. *Br. Birds* 71:558.
- Prater, A., Marchant, J., and Vuorinen, J. 1977. *Guide to the Identification and Ageing of Holarctic Waders.* British Trust for Ornithology, Tring.
- Veit, R. and Jonsson, L., 1984. Field identification of smaller sandpipers within the genus *Calidris*. *Am. Birds* 38:852.
- Wallace, D. 1974. Field identification of small species in the genus *Calidris*. *Br. Birds* 67:1.

*Accepted 20 November 1986*