

Red Phalarope

25 Sep 1991

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

\*M. Proescholdt, \*Cecil, \*Johnson

\*Pinkston, \*Fuller, \*R. Allen, \*Petersen; IBL 62(2),15,70, AB46:168,Proe

Record Number: 91-28  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS:

Mark Proescholdt, 25 Sep, Box 65, Liscomb, IA 50148

Robert Cecil, 26 Sep, 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA 50311

Ann Johnson, 26 Sep, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

Randall Pinkston, 26 Sep, 526 Reno, Iowa City, IA 52245

Jim Fuller, 26 Sep, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240

Reid Allen, 26 Sep, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA

50265

Peter C. Petersen, 27 Sep, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA

52803

Gerald White, 27 Sep, 1505 E. 5th St., Muscatine, IA 52761

Ray Cummins ?, 29 Sep

Jim Dinsmore, 29 Sep, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Tim Schantz, 26 Sep, P-0309, P-0343 (IBL 62:88)

Reid Allen, 26 Sep, P-0299 (IBL 62(2) cover)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:15

Photographs: American Birds 46:168 (P-0299), IBL 62(2) cover,  
(P-0299), IBL 62:88 (P-0343)

Records Committee: IBL 62:70

Proescholdt, M. 1992. Two more Red Phalaropes at Saylorville  
Reservoir. IBL 62:87-88.

VOTE: 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-P, This bird is in juvenile plumage (brown-black feathers  
with light buff edges) except for extensive patchy new basic  
feathers (light gray with white edge) on scapulars and coverts.  
The tubular bill and lack of white stripes at mantle and scapular  
borders are good identification marks.

A-D or A-P, Many good descriptions and details noted for a Red  
Phalarope. Tim Schantz's good, distinctive photo could make this  
A-P.

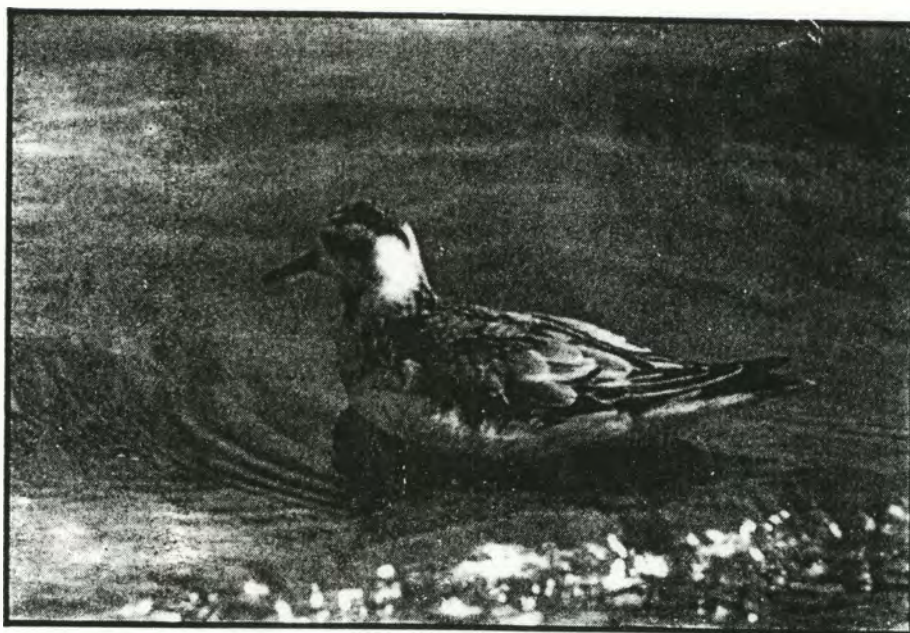
REVOTE at meeting of 11 Apr 1992: 7 A-P

91-28

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Spring 1992 Volume 62 Number 2



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

in the Marsh Wren, and it did not have the white outer tail feathers characteristic of Bewick's Wren.

Upon further observation, I looked for characteristics of the Rock Wren described by Peterson (1980). Having already noticed the buffy tail corners, I next noticed the presence of a finely streaked breast and the rusty rump, all characteristics of the Rock Wren. Furthermore, there are quite a few rocky outcrops along the small tributaries and rivers in the surrounding area; and there is a limestone quarry about 4 miles north of Red Oak which could provide adequate habitat for these birds.

According to Peterson (1980) (the only reference I had at the time I had possession of the bird), this species is accidental east of the Mississippi River; thus I assumed that this species was common in Iowa. That is where I made a very big mistake. Believing that I had stressed the bird enough (I had had it in my possession for about 10 minutes), I released it on the ground outside my garage without taking a picture (my second mistake). Fifteen minutes later, upon arriving at work, I checked the status of the Rock Wren in Iowa (Dinsmore et al. 1984). It was at this point I realized the rare occurrence of this bird in Iowa. I then went back to my house and, of course, could not find the bird anywhere. Through a couple of phone calls, one to Ross Silcock in Sidney and the other to a former teacher Dr. David Easterla at Northwest Missouri State University, I learned that there have only been a couple of documented sightings of this species in Iowa; however, this species was sighted and documented by Easterla in the Maryville, Missouri area, 60 miles south of Red Oak, in fall 1990.

#### LITERATURE CITED

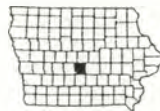
- Dinsmore, J. J., T. H. Kent, D. Koenig, P. C. Petersen, and D. M. Roosa. 1984. Iowa Birds. Iowa State University Press, Ames. 356 p.  
Peterson, R. T. 1980. A Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 384 p.

2000 Sunnyslope, Red Oak, IA 51566

#### A SECOND RED PHALAROPE AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

At 10:38 a.m. on 4 August 1991, while birding the Saylorville Reservoir dam in Polk County, I saw a Red Phalarope in basic plumage. Throughout the observation, the bird swam a few feet off the rocky dam face, gradually working to the east. The stocky body, thin neck, small head, and swimming behavior easily identified the bird as a phalarope. Though there were no other birds for direct comparison, I estimated that the bird was about the size of a Pectoral Sandpiper. The bill was roughly equal to the length of the head and was bicolored; dark near the tip, gradually fading to a small, pale area at the base of the bill. There was a dark spot around each eye that extended forward to the base of the bill. The forehead, cap, and nape were also dark. The broad white supercilium was also seen. The throat, sides of the neck, breast, and flanks were white and marked with irregular buffy patches. The undertail coverts were also white. The mantle was mostly pale gray except for several small, scattered black spots. The wings were darker than the



mantle with the primaries appearing black. The tail also looked black on the swimming bird. I was not able to observe the bird in flight. Separation from Red-necked Phalarope was based largely on bill shape and the unstreaked mantle. I concluded, on the basis of the pale gray mantle and bicolored bill, that the bird was an adult Red Phalarope that had nearly completed the molt to basic plumage.

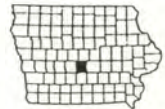
I last observed the bird at 11:14 a.m. just before other birders arrived. The bird was not relocated, despite a thorough search of the reservoir that afternoon. This is the second acceptable record of Red Phalarope in Iowa. The first was of a juvenile bird at Saylorville Reservoir on 30 September-3 October 1988 (Dinsmore, S. J., and B. Engebretsen. *Iowa Bird Life* 59:19. 1989).

2600 Glen Burnie, Raleigh, NC 27607

#### TWO MORE RED PHALAROPES AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

MARK PROESCHOLDT

On 25 September 1991, I went to the Sandpiper Beach area of Saylorville Reservoir to see what birds might be there. After scoping over the gulls, terns, and shorebirds on this sunny, windy day, I noticed a very whitish shorebird floating in a corner of a small bay at the east end of the beach. As I slowly moved to get closer to this bird, I could tell it was a phalarope since it had a dark bar through and behind its eye.



The following description is compiled from my notes and notes of other observers. The phalarope had a rather thick, short, black bill which was different from the longer and more needle-like bills of both the Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes. This bird had a light grayish back that was generally unmarked and had black showing at the wing edges along the flanks. It had a dark cap on its crown and a white forehead. The breast, belly, flanks, and undersides were very white. The sides of the neck were white with a rusty wash under its chin on its throat area. Its legs were fleshy pink in color. In flight, a very distinct wing stripe, a bold white V around a gray rump, and a black-gray terminal band on its tail were observed. It had the appearance of being short-necked and short-legged and appeared about the same size as a Pectoral Sandpiper. On close observation the back, wings, and tail were a contrasting gray and black pattern with white feather edgings on the gray feathers. This bird appeared to be in mid molt going to basic plumage. It was observed occasionally spinning and probing in the water at the pool's edge and walking along the shore. It was very tame and allowed very close approach. One observer speculated that it had never seen humans before and was therefore unafraid of people approaching it. The bird was present through 30 September, and many other birders were able to see it.

This is the third sighting of a Red Phalarope in Iowa. All have been at Saylorville Reservoir and all in fall migration. The first Red Phalarope sighting in Iowa was seen from 30 September to 3 October 1988 at the north end of the Saylorville Reservoir (Dinsmore, S. J., and B. Engebretsen, *Iowa Bird Life* 59:19, 1989). Iowa's second sighting of a Red Phalarope was seen by Steve Dinsmore on 4 August 1991, at the west overlook on the Saylorville Dam.

On 26 October 1991, another Red Phalarope was seen by a group of observers at Sandpiper Beach, Saylorville Reservoir. This was a very light-colored bird with a white neck, breast, and undersides. It was blackish along the wing edges at the flanks. It had two thin black lines that went the length of the back from the nape toward the

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Red Phalarope, Saylorville Reservoir,  
28 Sep 1991. Photo by Tim Schantz



Red Phalarope, Saylorville Reservoir,  
28 Sep 1991. Photo by Tim Schantz

tail. It had a very noticeable light-grayish back. Its relatively short bill was very thick, stout, and black. It had a very black crown and a strong black bar through and behind the eye. In flight, it had a very distinctive wingstripe. This bird appeared to be almost into its basic plumage. The bird was running along the shore, later flew around, landed in the water off shore by a fishing boat, stayed there for a while, and then was gone. Based on its plumage differences, it was probably a different bird from the two reported earlier in the fall.

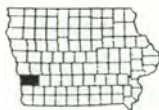
P. O. Box 65, Liscomb, IA 50148

## TRICOLORED HERON IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

JANET G. GREER

On 4 May 1991, Marge and Dutch Graf, Mary Jo Harlow, and I were participating in the Audubon Society of Omaha spring count. Upon our arrival at the Iowa Power and Light settling basins at 11:30 a.m., I noticed a medium-sized heron in the water near the rushes bordering the shore. It shortly flew away from the car, and I noted a stark white chin, slate-blue primaries and secondaries, and a rusty wash to the mantle and wing coverts. These characteristics convinced me that this bird was a Tricolored Heron.

The heron landed on the far shore of the settling basin and turned to face us. The entire belly and the upper part of the legs were stark white. The white extended up the flanks to the bend of the folded wings. As noted above, the chin was white in contrast to the dark of the entire face and crown. The long thin neck was mottled with rusty and white feathers. In addition, there were long rusty feathers on the breast. At the closest observation (75 feet), the distal one-fourth of both the upper and lower



mandibles appeared to be a different color than the base of the bill. The straight bill appeared long in proportion to the size of the bird. The legs, feet, and bill were a dark slate color. The bird appeared smaller than a Great Blue Heron, also present, although the two species were never side by side. At this time, the heron flew out of our range of vision.

We drove around the basins and relocated the heron standing on the fly-ash flat where we observed its behavior for almost an hour. The bird struggled to pick up a straight stick more than six feet long and carried it around over a large area of the fly ash. Several times the stick was dropped and picked up again. On several occasions, the heron approached a dead bush and shook it vigorously with its bill. After this, the bird would gently pick at the bush, thrusting its head at it. Often the heron stopped to scratch itself about the shoulders and neck with its foot. The bird was always active but it never approached the shore or resumed fishing while we watched.

We left the settling ponds to inform other birders about this bird but it was not relocated that afternoon nor on subsequent days. This is the second record of Tricolored Heron for Iowa and the first from the Missouri River Valley. The first was at Cone Marsh on 29 April 1989 (Kent, T. H., *Iowa Bird Life* 61:1-4, 1991).

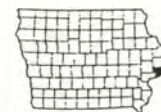
341 Steven Circle, Council Bluffs, IA 51503

## SECOND-YEAR GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

THOMAS H. KENT

On 14 January 1991, Jim Fuller found a dark-mantled gull on the Mississippi River in Bettendorf/Moline waters and reported it on the Birdline as a possible Lesser Black-backed Gull. On 15 January, Dick Tetrault and I found a dark-mantled gull there. Compared to Herring Gulls in the same field of view it was 30% larger, much darker backed, longer and thicker billed, longer legged making the bird stand taller, thicker legged (twice as thick as Herrings), and longer winged in flight. It had a long-necked, slender-headed, long-billed appearance. The bill was straight and mostly black with poorly demarcated light areas in the proximal one-third. The head and neck were white with dark eye, slight streak through the eye, and touch of gray on the posterior crown. The under parts were unstreaked white. The legs were a slightly darker pink than those of Herring Gulls. On the standing bird, the wings and back appeared rather uniform black-brown with indistinct feather edging. The primaries and tail band were black. The tertials and posterior scapulars were light gray, producing marks on the standing bird. In flight, the base of the tail was white and a terminal black band, which was indistinct proximally and thicker centrally, occupied about one-fourth of the tail. The outer primaries and their coverts were black, and I did not see any mirrors. The inner primaries, secondaries, coverts, and back were dark brown with thin feather edging. The trailing edge of the wing was pale. The underwing appeared medium neutral gray.

On 17 January, Jim Fuller saw the bird at closer range and recorded basically the same features. Other observers on the 15th and 16th recorded a gull with similar features but smaller in size. These observers came to different conclusions on the bird's identity; Western and Lesser Black-backed gull. On 7 and 8 February, Steve



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A Ruff at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, Alviso, California, on October 4, 1991. One of four present at this location. Photograph/Alan Walther.



The most conspicuous avian result from Hurricane Bob, which swept north up the Atlantic Coast in late August, was a scattering of southern terns over the coastal areas of the northeast. This Sandwich Tern, one of three found in Maine, was at Phippsburg on August 20, 1991. Photograph/Peter D. Vickery.



Although this hybrid combination has been found a number of times, it still can pose an identification problem for the birder who encounters it. This White-throated Sparrow X Dark-eyed Junco hybrid was banded at Cape May, New Jersey, in October 1991. Photograph/Greg Dodge.



Fourteen years after its first known occurrence north of the border, the Eared Trogon was finally documented nesting in Arizona in October 1991. The nest was in upper Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mountains, where this wary male was studied in September. Photograph/Gary H. Rosenberg.



Some inland records of Red Phalaropes are to be expected every autumn, but this season they were far more numerous and more widespread than normal. This individual was at Saylorville Reservoir, Iowa, on September 27, 1991. Photograph/Reid Allen.



This Yellow-billed Loon appeared November 17, 1991, at Beaver Lake in northwest Arkansas, and remained to the end of the period. There had been no previous records for the Central Southern Region. Photograph/Max Parker.



Red Phalarope P-0309  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
26 Sep 1991 Tim Schantz

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QUALITY PAPER  
MADE IN GERMANY

QUALITY PAPER  
MADE IN GERMANY

F-STOP 03496 NNN1A

91-28

Red Phalarope P-0299  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
27 Sep 1991 Reid Allen

F-STOP 00929 NNNAA

91-28

Red Phalarope P-0299  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
27 Sep 1991 Reid Allen

F-STOP 00929 NNN1A

What species? Red Phalarope How many? 1Location? Sandpiper Beach - Saylorville ReservoirType of habitat? Small little bay along a sandy shoreWhen? date(s): Sept. 25, 1991 time: <sup>approximately</sup> 5:30 p.m. to Sunset → 7:07 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Eugene and Eloise Armstrong came laterothers before or after you: Jim Fuller, Bob Cecil, Ann Johnson, Tim Schantz,  
many others

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

This bird was swimming and floating in a little bay at the east end of Sandpiper Beach almost all the time I observed it. It had a very noticeable thick black bar through the eye and behind it. It had a thick black bill that was shorter than other phalaropes and not needle-like and long like Wilson's and Red-Necked Phalaropes. It seemed to be  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the body size of a Black-Bellied Plover beside it. This bird had a light grayish, unmarked back with black at the wing edges. I saw a wing stripe when it flew briefly into the wind and this was seen from the underwings. It appeared to have a light rosy cast to part of its throat and neck. It had a darkish cap on its crown. It walked a bit and the legs appeared light in color. A very distinct wing stripe was seen on the top side of the wings as it flew a bit when Eugene and Eloise were there. It walked on the shore a bit at last <sup>little while.</sup>

Similar species and how eliminated: A Sanderling lacks the black bar through the eye and does not have a grayish back. A Red-Necked Phalarope has vivid streaks on its back and a longer, thinner bill. A Wilson's Phalarope has no wing stripe and has a long, thin bill and is a paler bird.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Mostly sunny, sun at my back or side as I looked easterly. Very strong NW winds from behind me. 90 yards away near the restrooms to 20 yards away estimated. 8x30 Binoculars and 22x Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen the first Red Phalarope at Saylorville very well and familiar with other phalaropes and Sanderling.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geographic Birds of N. America, R.T. Peterson's Birds - E. of Rockies guide.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? Sept. 29, 1991

# DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

91-28

What species? Red Phalarope How many? 1

Location? Sandpiper Beach at Sailorville, Polk Co., IA

Type of Habitat? Small pool by beach. Surrounded by sparse vegetation.

When? date(s): Sept. 26, 1991 time:            to           

Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil, 1315 41st St. Des moines, IA

Others with you:           

Others before or after you: Found by Mark Proescholdt, seen by everyone

*Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.*

I took field notes, but did not translate them into a full documentation. These are verbatim notes:

- Legs yellow orange.
- Dark eye patch, extending from eye to aricular area.
- Dark cap, which extends down nape.
- Supercilliary white.
- Underparts, throat to tail, white.
- Bill shorter than head and black.
- Swims readily.
- About the size of Pectorial (but comparison not made)
- Gray back. Gray extended from base of wing into the breast somewhat. See drawing.
- Appeared to be some lighter gray in the scapular region. Lighter gray or reflection?

## *Similar species; how eliminated:*

Gray, unstreaked back eliminates Red-necked. Short, stout bill eliminates Wilson's. Swimming behavior eliminates most other shorebirds.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.  
If yes, explain:           

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.

As colse as 50'. Bird seemed relatively tame. 10x binocs and 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: No relevant experience with Red. Moderate experience with Wilsons and Red-necked in basic plumage.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NGS.

How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? 2 months.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Red Phalarope

Location: Sandpiper Beach, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co., IA

Habitat: Cove in sandy beach area

Date: 26 September 1991

Time: 13:15 to 13:30 and  
17:00 to 18:00

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Bob Cecil, Jim Sinclair, Bob Meyers, Pam & Reid Allen

Description of bird: This was a rather small but plump shorebird, larger than a peep but considerably smaller than nearby Black-bellied Plovers. The first striking characteristic was how white it looked. The underparts were a gleaming white with the exception of a pale, rusty wash under the chin that was only visible when the bird was in certain light and a certain position. The face was white with a black stripe running from the dark eye to the back of the head. The crown was dark but not as black as the eye stripe. The neck was muscular looking and thick. The back was pearly gray with dark brownish/black scapulars. The primaries appeared to be this same color and contrasted with the gray mantle. The tail was pretty much hidden by the primaries but appeared to have significant dark feathering. The legs were light orange. The bill was dark and was shorter and stouter, especially at the base, than the other two phalaropes. The bird primarily fed on the shore but occasionally went into the water for a swim. On one occasion it flew a few feet, allowing me a look at the long, white wing stripe.

Similar species and how eliminated: Although the overall appearance was white, Sanderling could be eliminated by general structure. Head, neck and bill identified the bird as a phalarope. Aside from plumage characters, the bill shape eliminated a Wilson's Phalarope. Red-necked Phalarope was eliminated based on the lack of white streaking on the back, stockier neck, and thicker bill. In observing both Red and Red-necked Phalaropes in basic plumage last summer in the Bay of Fundy, the structural differences between the two made identification of rafts taking flight relatively simple. It was helpful to observe these differences from such close range and confirm some general impressions.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): The light varied but the sun was always somewhat toward the front. Lighting was not a problem, however, as I was able to position myself to where there was no glare and was able to approach to within about 30 feet of the bird. Observation was through 7x26 binoculars and scope at 20-25x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: First of this species seen in October 1988. Many in this plumage were seen one year ago in the Bay of Fundy.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Discussion with fellow observers; Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds was consulted during observation

How long before field notes made? On return home How long before this form completed? Same evening

Species: Red Phalarope

Habitat: Cove in sandy beach area

Time: 13:15 to 13:30 and 13:00 to 13:05

Date: 26 September 1991

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Bob Cecil, Jim Sinclair, Bob Meyers, Sam & Robin Allen

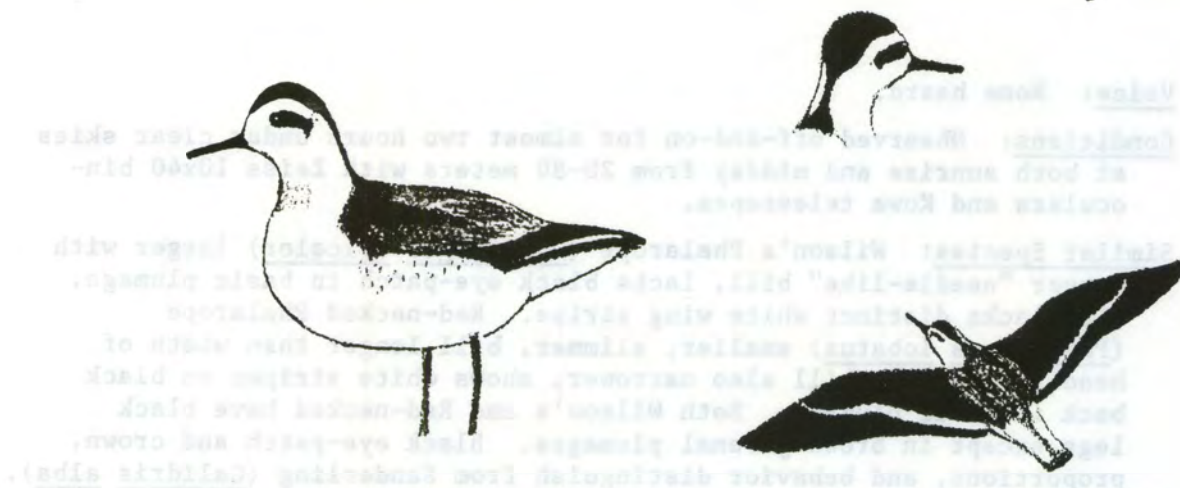
Description of bird: This was a rather small but plump shorebird, larger than a quail but considerably smaller than many Black-bellied Plover. The bird's striking characteristic was how white it looked. The waterbirds were a gleaming white with the exception of a pale, rusty wash under the chin that was only visible when the bird was in certain light and a certain position. The face was white with a black stripe running from the dark eye to the back of the head. The crown was dark but not as black as the eye stripe. The neck was muscular, looking and thick. The back was nearly gray with dark brownish/black mottling. The primaries appeared to be this same color and contrasted with the rest of the bird. The tail was pretty much hidden by the primaries but appeared to have significant dark feathering. The legs were light orange. The bill was dark and a short and stout, especially at the base, than the other two phalaropes. The bird primarily fed on the shore but occasionally went into the water for a swim. On one occasion it flew a few feet, allowing me a look at the long, white wing stripes.

Similar species and how eliminated: Although the overall appearance was white, Sanderling could be eliminated by general structure. Head, neck and bill identified the bird as a phalarope. Aside from plumage characteristics, the bill shape eliminated Wilson's Phalarope. Red-necked Phalarope was eliminated based on the lack of white streaking on the back, streaked neck, and thicker bill. In observing both Red and Red-necked Phalaropes in basic plumage last summer in the Bay of Fundy, the structural differences between the two made identification of birds taking flight relatively simple. It was helpful to observe these differences from such close range and confirm some general impressions.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): The light varied but the sun was always somewhat toward the front. Lighting was not a problem, however, as I was able to position myself so where there was no glare and was able to approach to within about 50 feet of the bird. Observation was through 7x35 binoculars and scope at 20-25x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None of this species seen in October 1988. Many in this plumage were seen one year ago in the Bay of Fundy.



RED PHALAROPE  
Phalaropus fulicarius

Basic plumage

Date: 26 September 1991

Time: Approx. 7-7:45 a.m., noon-1 p.m.

Location: Sandpiper Recreation Area Beach, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co., Iowa

Same bird discovered by Mark Proescholdt the previous evening (25 September)

Description: A plump, short-necked sandpiper with small, round head, slightly smaller than adjacent Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus). Basically black above, white below.

Distinct black eye-patch and crown as illustrated. Broad black crown narrowed posteriorly, continuous with black stripe on hindneck. Forehead narrowly white, continuous with white on remainder of head and neck. Anterior base of neck with faint patch of chestnut suffusion, visible only through telescope at close range.

Bill entirely black, straight and "tubular" not "needle-like". Bill very slightly shorter than width of head in profile.

Faint gray spotting and barring at sides extending ventrally to a point at bend of wing. Remainder of underparts unmarked bright white.

Perhaps the most notable feature of this bird was its unmarked upperparts of plain medium gray. Back and scapulars separated by a feather tract of black on each side.

Folded wings very dark gray to black, appeared to have white feather shafts. Spread wings in flight dark gray to black, prominent white stripe formed at bases of remiges.

Tail not seen well but appeared grayish at least distally on rectrices.

Legs fleshy-pink, almost yellowish in dawn light.

Behavior: Solitary. Walking shore of sheltered lakeshore pools through most of observation time. Somewhat nervous at sunrise, taking flight often back and forth in the same area, less so in the afternoon allowing closer approach. Occasional spinning and probing in water at pool edge.

(over)

Voice: None heard.

Conditions: Observed off-and-on for almost two hours under clear skies at both sunrise and midday from 20-80 meters with Zeiss 10x40 binoculars and Kowa telescopes.

Similar Species: Wilson's Phalarope (Phalaropus tricolor) larger with longer "needle-like" bill, lacks black eye-patch in basic plumage, also lacks distinct white wing stripe. Red-necked Phalarope (Phalaropus lobatus) smaller, slimmer, bill longer than width of head in profile, bill also narrower, shows white stripes on black back in basic plumage. Both Wilson's and Red-necked have black legs except in brown juvenal plumages. Black eye-patch and crown, proportions, and behavior distinguish from Sanderling (Calidris alba).

Previous Experience: One sighting of a flock of Red Phalaropes, also in basic plumage, offshore San Diego, California, 8 September 1979. Several sightings through the years of Wilson's Phalaropes in both basic and alternate plumages, most recently near Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., Iowa, 20 July 1991. Four basic-plumaged Red-necked Phalaropes studied well just recently also at Coralville Reservoir, Iowa, 1 September 1991.

--Randall Pinkston  
526 Reno Street  
Iowa City, IA 52245-3039  
Ph. (319) 351-0592

25-1P 91-28

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Red Phalarope (Juvenile...moulting)

LOCATION: Saylorville Reservoir (Polk County) Beach of Sandpiper Recreation Area.

DATE and TIME: 26 September. 7:05-7:45AM and 12:25-1:00PM

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHER OBSERVERS: In the morning, Denny Thompson was just leaving as we arrived, and Bery Engebretson was still there. In the afternoon, Tim Schantz was there, and Bob Cecil arrived just as we were leaving. Present with me were Jim Scheib, Randy Pinkston, and Chuck Fuller. The bird was reported by Mark Proesholdt, and m.obs also reported seeing it during its stay.

BACKGROUND: Mark Proescholdt reported to the Iowa Birdline seeing a red phalarope at this location from 5:30PM-Dark on Wednesday, September 25. Four of us already had a trip to the central part of the state scheduled for the next day, and so we arrived at Saylorville at sunup on September 26. We stopped again to look at the bird in midday light shortly after noon.

DESCRIPTION: In general, the bird seemed to be a pudgy, rather short necked and short legged shorebird. General coloration was black, white and gray which contrasted greatly with each other. The only size comparison was with a killdeer, and this bird appeared to be noticeably smaller, although probably by no more than 20 percent.

The head was white, except for a black crown and nape stripe which connected with the dark feathering of the mantle, and a dark smudge around and behind the dark eye. The bill was black and thick compared to other phalaropes. Its length was very close to the width of the head.

The belly, breast, and foreneck were white, except for a subtle somewhat rectangular shaped wash of red on the throat.

The back, wings, and tail were a contrasting black, and gray, with white feather edgings on the gray feathers. The most distinctive feature was a black line created by dark median covert feathers which contrasted with the white sides of the belly. The primaries and secondaries on the folded wing appeared black. The scapulars were an interesting combination of black and gray feathers. The tail was very slightly longer than the primary extension.

The legs appeared to be a yellow-pink color in the morning, but in the midday light appeared to be flesh colored. They were short compared to most shorebirds.

The bird did fly short distances on several occasions, and the wing showed a very prominent white stripe. Because I did not see it flying much or for any distance, it was difficult to describe exactly the extent or location of the stripe.

BEHAVIOR: Most of the time the bird spent hunched down at the water's edge. It did walk along the sand spit, and I did see it floating on the water several times. Once, while in the water, it swam in a circular motion typical of phalaropes. No vocalization was heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The thick bill is the key difference between this bird and the other phalaropes. It also seemed to be shorter legged, shorter necked, and pudgier than other phalaropes. The dark crown, nape, and eye smudge compare to the generally light grey of Wilson's phalarope. Wilson's phalarope also has a thin bill which is longer than the width of the head. This bird might be confused with basic plumaged sanderling, but that bird does not have the dark crown, nape, or eye smudge, it has dark legs and a distinctive manner of running along the sand.

VIEWING CONDITIONS and OPTICS The bird was watched with both 8.5 X 44 Swift Audubon binoculars, and a KOWA TSN-4 telescope with 20-60X zoom lens. Most of the time the viewing was toward the west, and in the morning the sun was behind us. The day was clear, with a south breeze, and there had been an early frost that night.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: None

REFERENCES and FIELD NOTES: Field notes were made immediately after returning to the car, and this report was typed on 10/4/91. No guides were consulted while making the field notes. National Geographic, and Shorebirds, by Hayman, et.al. were consulted later.

91-28

**DOCUMENTATION**

SPECIES: Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*)

HOW MANY: One

LOCATION: Sandpiper Beach, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County, Iowa

HABITAT: Shallow pool of water on large sand beach next to reservoir

DATE: September 26 & 27, 1991

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: One/half hour on 9/26 and one hour on 9/27

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Mark Proescholdt

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Reid Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street,  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Pam Allen, Bob Myers, Ann Johnson

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: A small shorebird, usually actively swimming/feeding in water pool, sometimes walking along edge of water and feeding. This bird had a heavy and short black bill, with a white face except for dark area around eye, and reddish-brown patch behind the eye. The top of the head was reddish-brown and this "cap" extended as a narrow line down the back of the otherwise white neck to join the coloring on the back and wings. The throat showed a small patch of pale peach red color. The back was mostly reddish-brown with cream-colored flecks, while the wings were composed of gray or dark brown feathers edged in white. The primaries were dark brown with white edges. The under body was white and the legs were grayish. This was probably a juvenile bird, judging by the upperpart color.  
**Photograph/slides (2) enclosed. Other slides available.**

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: Wilson's Phalarope has a long, very thin bill and the Northern (Red-necked) Phalarope also has a long, thin bill.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Ideal. Viewed from 50 feet to within 8 feet.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: None

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TSN-4 scope, Bushnell 8x36 Custom Binoculars, Minolta X-700 camera with 300 mm. lens. Film was Kodak Kodachrome 200 and 64 ASA.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: Shorebirds: An Identification Guide; Peter Hayman, John Marchant & Tony Prater, 1986. North Atlantic Shorebirds; Richard J. Chandler, 1989.

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES MADE: September 27, 1991

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: December 1, 1991

**DOCUMENTATION FORM**  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

91-28

What species? Red Phalarope How many? 1

Location? Sandpiper Recreation Area, Saylorsville Reservoir

Type of Habitat? shoreline

When? date(s): Sep. 27, 1991 time: 12:40 to 12:45 P.M. CST

Who? your name and address: Peter C. Petersen 235 McClellan Blvd. Davenport, IA 52803

Others with you: none

Others before or after you: no obs.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

medium sized shorebird, back partly grey, partly brown - seemed in transition. Bill <sup>short</sup> dark, eyes dark. Top of head brownish grey, body <sup>below</sup> white. Bird not flushed - seemed large for a phalarope, very tame. Bird silent

Similar species; how eliminated: From Red-necked Wilson's by short, stout bill, size & lack of streaking on back.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Partly Cloudy, good light from side. distance 6 m. at closest 30X60 scope & 10X40 Zeiss binocs

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen off E. & W. Coasts of FLA.

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? Pennington this form completed? 6 hrs.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

85-1P 91-28

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species Red Phalarope How many? one

Location? Sandpiper Beach area of Saylorville Reservoir

Type of habitat? sandy beach

When? date(s): 29 September 1991 Time: .4 p.m.

Who? your name and address Jim Dinsmore

4024 Arkansas Drive

Ames, IA

Others with you Hank Zalatel

Others before and after you Mark Proescholdt, et al.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also describe voice and behavior.

Medium sized shorebird, compared directly with Pectoral Sandpiper, about the same size as that species although body appeared a bit chunkier and the bird might have been slightly larger than the Pectoral.

The bird appeared largely gray in color on the dorsal surface and white on the underside.

I noted the following on the bird.

Bill was fairly stout (not needlelike as in the other two phalaropes, basically straight with perhaps a slight droop at the tip, dark colored

Underside was light colored except for a very faint light reddish brown wash on a small part of the breast

The eye was dark with a patch of dark feathers around the eye giving the appearance of a very large eye. There was also a dark patch on the side of the head behind the eye and separate from the eye patch.

The cap of the head was dark although I didn't note it carefully.

Other than those areas, the rest of the head was white.

The back had a very scalloped or scaly appearance with a number of light gray feathers standing out boldly.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The bill was very different from that of both other phalaropes, both of which have fairly long needle-like bills.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?

If yes, explain:

not that I know of

Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: 20 power spotting scope, light was good, bird was about 30 feet away so I had a good full field view of the bird. It was tame and easy to follow.

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: I have only seen one of this species before although I have seen both other species of phalaropes a number of times

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Guide

How long before field notes made? mental notes made in field  
this form completed? two days later

Mail original form to field editor for this season.

Similar species and how eliminated:

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

91-28

What species? Red Phalarope (Juvenile) How many? oneLocation? Saylorville Lake (sandpiper beach), IAType of habitat? Sand bottom puddle on lake shoreWhen? date(s): Sept 27, 1991 time: 11:20 a to 11:45 aWho? your name and address: Gerald White 1505 E. 5th St.  
Muscatine, IA 52761 (319-263-3464)others with you: Eugene & Elaise Armstrongothers before or after you: J. Fuller & P. PetersenDescribe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior. Size was about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of

nearby Black-Bellied Plover had shore bird shape with fresh plumage.

(Bill - black, larger at base but not finely tipped, no longer than depth of head from bill base to nape) (Head: white with dusky black crown narrowing on nape to fine line of same color down back of neck to the back, same color eye strip from eye to half way to nape) (Forehead - white) (Chin - white). (throat - had a wash of rust or brown) (Back - mostly gray with white edging except one short streak in center which was dark brown or dusky black edged with tan) (Scapulars were dark with tan edge, some es back streak) (chest - belly - flank, all white) (legs were not black but dark)

- Bird flew and I observed - (Wing - dark dusky brown or black except for bold white bar approx  $\frac{3}{8}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  in wide at base of secondaries and some primary or white tips to coverts on secondaries & some primaries, most primaries were dark) (tail - same dark uniform color as wing) (wing & tail description from above)

P.S. I didn't see a white wing bar on folded wing so white color was prob. on base of flight feathers (the bird was feeding at waters edge, it was also swimming on occasion)

Similar species and how eliminated: Red-Necked Phalarope - fine bill, darker back  
Sanderling - no eye strip, wing pattern has more tones

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
(Overcast but bright) approx. 50 yds. 10x40 Lietz 25 or 30x Scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: limited with Red-necked, many sanderlings, one Red Phalarope

References and persons consulted before writing description: (Seabirds, Harrison)  
(Audubon Master Guide) (N.G.S.) (Bird of N.A. Robbins)

How long before field notes made? at site on this form completed? 10-5-91  
recorder 10-7-91

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

9/1-28

GERALD D WHITE  
1505 E 5TH ST  
MUSCATINE IOWA 52761  
319 263-3464

10-7-91

Dear Tom,

Enclosed is a copy of my Phalarope documentation,  
I have made two additions to the copy I  
sent Carl Bendorf. The additions are notes  
that I saw the wing & Tail from above  
and I added a comment about behavior.

As far as I'm concerned you can treat  
this copy as the original and destroy  
the copy I sent Bendorf.

I thought Carl was doing the  
fall reports.

Sincerely

Jerry

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Sightings in Iowa

Reg Cummings? 9/28

What Species? Winter plumaged Red Palarope

How Many? 1

Location? Salorville Lake Boone Co.

Type of Habitat? Back water pool sandy beach

When? date(s): 9/29 1991

time 7:00am to 7:30am

Others with you: None

Circumstance? I found the bird at sandpiper beach as reported on Iowa Birdline. I was able to approach within 5 feet, very tame, as it was intent on eating small insects off the water at a corner of the back water pool.

Description: As the bird waded in a swamp I noticed the following: 1) Black non-tapered bill which was only as long as the head. 2) Flesh colored legs. 3) Black eye with black ear mark. 4) Breast was white with no streaks. 5) Mantle gray with black coverts, tertials, secondaries, and primaries. 6) Tail and primaries end at the same place. In flight I saw the following: 1) Bold white mark between the body and primaries, and above secondaries and below the greater covert. 2) Bold white V around the a grey rump with blackgrey terminal band.

Similar species: Other Phalaropes by thick non-tapered bill and bold white V on rump.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? N/A

Viewing conditions: Good light from as close as 5 feet. 10x50 Nikon binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Am familiar with the other two phalaropes from Iowa.

References: National Geographic during sighting details all double checked during sighting.

How long before field notes made? on sight this form completed? 1&1/2 months

91-28

Rare Bird Report

Species: Red Phalarope

Observer: Tim Schantz, Jim Fuller, Chuck Fuller, Jim Shieb, Randy Pinkston, Bob Cecil.

Date: September 26 1991

Location: Sandpiper Beach Recreation Area, Saylorville Lake, Polk Co. Iowa

Optics: Zeiss 10\*40B, Nikon 8008, Sigma 400mm APO, Fuji 50 film.

Documentation: See Photograph

Circumstances: A molting bird was feeding in a shallow sandy bay Southeast of the bath houses. (See photo submitted to Iowa Records committee). Very tame. I heard about the bird from Ann Johnson at a Rolling Hills Audubon meeting on the 25th. I then went to see the bird the following day.

*Tim Schantz*