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Sandy Kovanda
Omaha, Nebraska

Jim Kovanda
Omaha, Nebraska

Bill Otto
Omaha, Nebraska

Eldon Marsh
Brunswick, Nebraska

Barbara Marsh
Brunswick, Nebraska

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SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER AND IVORY GULL REPORTED

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER. On 12 October 1986 we saw an unusual sandpiper, in company of three dowitchers, on the east side of Nebraska Highway 15, about half the distance between the Platte River and Octavia, Butler Co. We watched the bird from about 1:30 to about 2:30 PM so the sun was at our backs. We had two telescopes (one used at 20x, the other at 40x), and one 8x and two 10x binoculars, and had the Peterson and National Geographic guides. The road ditch was flooded; the adjacent land was pasture. The bird was 30 to 40 feet from us at all times.

We thought the bird to be a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*). It had a dark gray eye stripe and a finely barred reddish cap, which set off a white superciliary. The eye stripe and cap met at the base of the upper mandible. The superciliary appeared to be broadest near the back of the head, but did not extend behind the head. The back of the head and the nape were slightly buff colored, with fine dark barring. The solid black, thick bill was equal to the length of the head. The back had a scaly appearance; the body of each feather was black and the edges were golden. The wings extended just beyond the tail tip and the black primary feathers were edged with red. Overall, the back and wings were rufous/golden with black scales which increased in size as they approached the tail. The white throat was highlighted by finely barred white cheeks and a buffy breast. The breast had a fine barring on the edges and a very faint necklace. The necklace was created by a few short dark streaks, and was seen only under high magnification. The remainder of the breast was unbarred buff, which ended sharply at the belly. The belly and undertail coverts were white and unbarred. Its short legs were yellow, with large yellow feet. The bird at times fed near the dowitchers, affording a good size comparison. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was about two-thirds the size of the dowitchers. The bird picked at the grass and water surface, rather than probing. It also tended to feed near the water's edge. It did not call, raise its wings, nor fly while under our observation.

We ruled out the birds with which we are familiar: the Pectoral Sandpiper because this bird did not have a barred breast; the Western Sandpiper because this bird was larger and had a buffy breast; and the Stilt Sandpiper because this bird had short legs.

--- Sandy and Jim Kovanda, 8002 So. 45th Ave., Omaha, Neb. 68157
Bill Otto, 5009 Lafayette St., Omaha, Neb. 68132

Babs Padelford and B. J. Rose went out the next day to try to photograph the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, but the birds had moved.

IVORY GULL. On 12 October 1986 we were birding six miles east and half a mile south of Brunswick, Antelope Co. The day was overcast, with periods of light mist. It had snowed the day before, and the temperature was about 45° to 50°.

We were sitting in our vehicle at the edge of the road, facing south, when a white gull appeared, coming toward us at a low altitude. The wings were pointed, and the flap of the wings was definitely gull. It was completely white, with black legs and feet and a black bill. Before reaching us it veered to our right and landed in a new short green growth rye field. It presented us a full side view from about 100 yards away. We viewed it for perhaps three minutes. We were both using 10 power glasses - Ziess 10x25 and Tasco 7-15x35. While the tip of the beak did not show yellow, it was light colored. Outside of the dark eye, and black legs, feet, and bill, there were no markings. It was a clear white, not off-colored gray or tan. We judged its length to be fourteen inches. From *A Guide to Field Identification Birds of North America* by Robbins, Bruun, Zim, and Singer, and *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, National Geographic Society, we identified this bird as an Ivory Gull. It flew off to the northeast. We turned around and followed, but did not sight it again.

--- Eldon and Barbara Marsh, PO Box 365, Brunswick, Neb. 68725-0365

These apparently are the first reports of these two species in Nebraska. The Records Committee has not yet reviewed these reports. Babs Padelford points out that *Iowa Birds* (p. 149) reports a sight record for the Sharp-tailed

Sandpiper at the Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., Iowa 3 October 1974 and (p. 168) reports a sight record of an immature Ivory Gull at Rathburn Reservoir, Appanoose Co., Iowa 20 December 1975. *The AOU Checklist* (sixth edition) calls the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (p. 198) casual in Colorado and Iowa, and the Ivory Gull (p. 226) casual in Iowa.

--- Eldon and Barbara Marsh, PO Box 365, Brunswick, Neb. 68725-0365