

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Number: (leave blank)
Location: Date: Time:
Bird Seen: To: Age/Sex:

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Long bill appeared orange or yellowish near the face, grading to a dark tip.
Long dark legs, long mobile neck.
Generally similar shape to other long-necked wading birds.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

Overall color was brown, with white points in the center of each brown feather; the smaller feathers of the head and neck showed more white, while the body shaded gradually to a darker brown, with less white area, on the body and tail.
The way the white points were arranged on the body reminded me of an artichoke.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

None heard. Location was very noisy.

Description of behavior:

The Limpkin was on the west side of the pond, north of the bridge. It waded along the edge of the pond, at about a depth of 18" to 24", dipping its head deeply into the water, and often re-emerging with an apple snail, which it worked with on the edge of the pond, and then ate. It ate 4 or 5 snails while we watched, sitting on the sidewalk of the little bridge, less than 30 feet from the Limpkin, who ignored us, as it ignored the swimming Mallard ducks, frequent cars, a runner, and several people chatting and walking about in the neighborhood across the street. It finally paid attention when a schoolbus stopped with loud diesel chugging and squeaky brakes: it flew up, with its neck out-stretched and its long, dark legs already swinging forward for a landing, right over our heads and into the south end of the little pond. There, it went right back to the business of wading, catching apple snails and ignoring everything else. It did pause after a few moments to take a splashy bath, and preen its damp feathers back into order.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

At the light on Route 34 at the Sheetz store between Scott Depot and Hurricane, turn onto Mount Vernon Road, and then turn right onto Stonebrook Road, which crosses a low 2-lane bridge with a concrete railing at the entrance to a townhouse subdivision. The bridge crosses a small, narrow pond; on the west, a grassy margin of only 4 to 6 feet parallels Mount Vernon Road, a main artery for this dense suburban area. On the north, some small trees and bushes separate the pond from the next neighborhood; on the northern part of the east side of the pond is a narrow grassy area behind the first townhouse; on the southern part of the east side of the pond is an even smaller holding pond, with grassy embankments and a few cattails; on the south end is a more substantial group of trees and bushes. There were less than 20 Mallards in the pond, but no other birds were seen.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)
We sat on the sidewalk of the little bridge, less than 30 feet from the Limpkin. The light was from the west, not too bright, and not in our faces. We had a very clear, unobstructed view of the bird, with and without binoculars and cameras. We got many clear photos, some with apple snails.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S154473872> (includes photos)

Previous experience with this species:

From a distance, we saw the Lewis County Limpkin at Stonewall Lake on 10-15-2023.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

David Wills was also present.

Also, there were several posts (with photos) on Mountain State Birders facebook page describing observations of this Limpkin.

Additional observer signature:

David G. Wills

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:

Starting in mid-October, there were many wonderful posts on the Mountain State Birders facebook page with photos of the Lewis County Limpkin at Stonewall Lake.

Barb Sargent posted on the Mountain State Birders facebook page that her friend had seen this Limpkin in Putnam County, and that it had been in this location for more than a month.

We think there may have been an observation by another birder at 2:00p; we arrived at the location at 4:00p.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

It has been almost a month since we saw the Limpkin.

Name:

Anne Wills

Address:

Date:

12-09-2023

Signature:

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
170 Stallion Ct.
Hedgesville, WV 25427
Or E-mail to:
wilhershberger@mac.com







