

Whimbrel – Preston Co.

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: As described in the report, the bird was a Whimbrel and could not be mistaken for anything else.

CM2: This is a well-documented record that occurred during a mini incursion of this species into our state. Weather patterns and timing seemed to deliver a relative large number of Whimbrels to our area and this sighting fits right along. As for the identification, it is rather straightforward given the photos. Other large Curlew species are really the only potential confounders. Bill and plumage shape relatively easily eliminate those from consideration. Furthermore, those species are far more unlikely to occur in our state. Provenance concerns are not an issue here.

CM3: Observer's written report and photograph eliminate all other possibilities.

CM4: An experienced WV birder provided excellent documentation of his observation. The observer provided a photograph, heard the bird vocalize, which added support to the observation, in addition to giving a complete description of a Whimbrel. While the photograph was digiscoped, and not to the quality the observer suggested he would have liked, it is clear to me that the observer saw a Whimbrel. The observer had previous experience with this species in the past. There were other Whimbrels in West Virginia that were observed by other birders during this same week of observation. The optics used for the observation were of good quality. The observer was fortunate to have had 10 minutes to observe this beautiful shorebird. I support this report of a Whimbrel.

CM5: The record meets the standard for inclusion on the state list. The observer gave an excellent description of the visual observation. The report included a description of the vocalization heard which is consistent with whimbrel. He also described past experience and how other birds were ruled out. He sealed the report with photograph which confirms the Whimbrel.

CM6: Nicely described and nothing new to the observer.

CM7: The photo shows a relatively large shorebird with a curved bill and generally brown mottling on the entire body. The curved bill limits this bird to one of only two species, Whimbrel or Long-billed Curlew. However, the bill of this bird is approximately two times the width of the head. Long-billed Curlews have a bill that is typically 3-4 times the width of the head whereas the Whimbrel has a bill that is typically two times the width of the head. I agree with the identification of this species based on the length of the bill.