

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species:	Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus	Number: (leave blank)			
Location:	Reedsville Farm, Reedsville, Preston County	Date:	May 24, 2019	Time:	3:29 pm
Bird Seen:	3:29 pm	To:	3:53 pm	Age/Sex:	Adult/Unknown

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.)

The bird was a large shorebird, about the size of a teal or other small duck. It had a relatively long neck, long legs, and a very long down-curved bill. The bill was blackish with a hint of a pinkish base to the lower mandible. The legs were grayish.

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

The upperparts were a complex mottling of brown and buff, the neck and flanks had brown streaks, and the underparts were buffy. In flight, the outer primaries were dark and unmarked. Its most distinctive features, which distinguish Whimbrel from other species of curlews, were a dark crown with a central buffy stripe extending from the base of the bill to the back of the head, and a dark stripe extending from the gape of the bill, through the eye, and terminating behind the eye.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

When the bird flew (see below) it made a series of loud "pip-pip-pip-pip-pip" whistled notes that ran together.

Description of behavior:

During the time I observed the bird, it remained stationary and occasionally preened. After about ten minutes, it flew, circled the pond a couple of times while calling, and disappeared to the north.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

Reedsville Farm has a small collection of horse barns, an arena for horse shows, and other outbuildings. The surrounding area consists of open fields with a small pond. There is a gravel parking area to the east and south of the pond. The bird was in the gravel lot south of the pond during the time I observed it.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

I first noticed the bird from my car as I pulled into the parking lot. It was about 100 to 120 yards away. I got out of the car, observed the bird through my Zeiss Terra ED 42 10X42 binoculars and Kowa TSN-661 spotting scope, and took a poor-quality digiscoped photograph with my Canon Power Shot SX620 HS camera. The day was sunny and clear, but because it was late in the day, I was looking into the glare of the afternoon sun when I observed and photographed the bird. The glare did not prevent me from getting good looks at the bird, but it did make it difficult to get a better photograph.

Previous experience with this species:

I have had previous field experience with Whimbrel in California, Illinois, Texas, Africa, South America, and the Middle East.

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

I have had field experience with Long-billed Curlew, which is the only other species of North American curlew which could conceivably be confused with this species. (Other species of Eurasian curlews could be mistaken for Whimbrel, but they have never been recorded in this area and would be virtually unheard of here). Long-billed Curlew is much larger than Whimbrel, has a longer bill, and lacks the dark head stripes of Whimbrel.

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.

N/A

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

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

I did not consult any field guides because I knew immediately what this bird was.

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

I saw the bird on May 24, 2019. I wrote a rough draft of this report a few days later, but didn't type up the final report until August 17, 2019.

Name:

David Daniels

Address:

Date:

8/17/19

Signature:

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

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

There was an influx of Whimbrels into West Virginia the week of my observation. Twenty-two were reported in Mason County on May 19, 2019 and two were reported in Cabell County on May 23, 2019.

