

5. It was able to wade in water slightly deeper than that which the Greater Yellowlegs were in (at all times it stayed within 5 feet of the Greater Yellowlegs).

Considerations: The dark legs and bill shape and size appeared to rule out Ruff, Redshank or Greenshank despite the belief (Ray Cooke – personal communication) that one of these birds may have been sighted in the same location just days before. Bill shape, size and colouration would rule out most other shorebirds with the exception of the Godwit Species. A white rump and black tail band would rule out Bar-tailed Godwit leaving 2 species to be considered. Hudsonian Godwits have a dark under-wing thus eliminating this species from consideration. This leaves Black-tailed Godwit as a consideration. To my knowledge this species has only reported once before on PEI – at Cymbria. Black-tailed Godwits range in size from 12 to 15 inches which indicates that this some members of this species can be just slightly larger than a Greater Yellowlegs. The bill size, shape and colouration taken into consideration along with the white rump, black tail and white underwings are entirely consistent with Black-tailed Godwit. The fact that a few alternate plumage feathers were still on this bird and other feathers had a “worn” appearance to them further suggests that this was an adult Black-tailed Godwit. I am attempting to determine if the sub-species can ultimately be identified.

Vocalizations/Photos: None Heard/Taken

Conclusion: Basic Plumaged adult **Black-tailed Godwit** of undetermined sex.

IDENTIFICATION RESOURCES USED

The Sibley Guide to Birds. 1st edition, second printing. D. Sibley. 2001; National Geographic Guide to the Birds of North America. 3rd Edition; Shorebirds – An Identification Guide. P. Hayman; J. Marchant; T. Prater. 1986; Audubon Society Master Guide to Birds. Volume 1 – Loons to Sandpipers. J. Farrand. 1983; Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest. D. Paulson. 1993; Photographic Guide to the Shorebirds of the World. D. Rosair; D. Cottridge. 1995; Wading Birds of the World. E. Soothill; R. Soothill. 1982; The Birds of Canada. Revised Edition. W.E. Godfrey. 1986; Birds of Eastern and Central North America. 5th Edition. 2002; Lives of North American Birds. K. Kaufman. 1996; Birds of Ontario. J. Hughes. 2001; <http://www.oceanwanderers.com/NYBlacktailedGodwit.html>; <http://www.oceanwanderers.com/AsiaticBTGodwit.html>; <http://www.hawfinches.freereserve.co.uk/GodwitIdentification.pdf>; <http://www.oceanwanderers.com/NYBarTailGodwit.html>; <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/Idtips/h2520id.html>

Editor's Note: This article represents a less technical description of this bird record the original version was filed with the Society's bird records.

WEATHER EVENTS:

A northeaster with winds hitting 80 to 90 km per hours and gusts of 115 to 145 km per hour dropped 55 cm of snow in Charlottetown on Dec. 27th causing the postponement of the Hillsborough Christmas Bird Count. Significant flooding was caused by a tidal surge at Savage Harbour and a number of wharfs and structure were either inundated or damaged by the ice and storm surge waves at Basin Head, Crowbush (Lakeside), Panmure Island, Tracadie, Lew London. Heavy rains and temperatures of 8 to 13 degrees centigrade led to a winter thaw on Jan. 12th. This was followed by unprecedented snows falls, 3 sequential nor'easters with winds of up to 100+ km dropped 111 cm of snow in the eight days between Jan. 17th and Jan. 25th leaving snow banks of 300+ cm and almost center bare fields.

ANIMAL AND PLANT SIGHTINGS:

Compiled by J. Dan McAskill

PLANTS:

The white spruce cone crop was abundant this past autumn creating good foraging conditions for cone feeding birds and mammals. There were good crops of false holly, mountain ash, and wild rose in some areas while low amounts in others (JDM).

