

April's *At a Glance* mystery photograph gives the reader a marvelously definitive view of a species that observant readers of this journal have seen regularly depicted for the past fourteen years. Yes, the shorebird in the picture is an alternate-plumaged Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*).

The bird's large size, as indicated by both its tarsal and bill length, and its generally dark ventral coloration limit the bird's identity to one of only several Holarctic shorebird species. Although the recurvature of the bill is partially obscured by the grass in the foreground of the photograph, the bird's **black tail** and **white rump** are obvious. Additionally, and most importantly, the **velvety-black underwing coverts** and **axillaries** contrast sharply with the white in the wing stripe. This combination of characters virtually eliminates confusion of the Hudsonian Godwit with any other shorebird in the northern hemisphere, with the possible exceptions being the palearctic Black-tailed Godwit (which has occurred as a vagrant in Massachusetts) and the Willet. The Black-tailed Godwit in a similar posture would display **strikingly white underwing coverts** and **axillaries**, a **more extensively white wing stripe**, and **more white on the rump**, thus giving the viewer the impression of nearly complete whiteness on the underwings and sides of the rump.

A Willet, by contrast, would not appear as dark beneath as the bird in the photo, and it would show a stouter and thicker bill. Also, the broad white wing stripe of a Willet would extend fully to the lead edge of the wing, and there would be a narrow band of white on the underside of the leading edge of the wing.

The Hudsonian Godwit in the picture was photographed during fall migration at Monomoy Island, Chatham, Massachusetts.

Wayne R. Petersen



Hudsonian Godwit

Photo by Roger Everett

AT A GLANCE

Photo by Robert Marshall



Can you identify this bird?

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.



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