

## AT A GLANCE: December 1987 \_\_\_\_\_ by Wayne R. Petersen

The **At a Glance** bird for December represents one of the small sandpipers that are collectively called "peep," i.e., Baird's, White-rumped, Western, Semipalmated, and Least. The fine, slightly curved, and pointed bill, extremely long primaries, strongly scalloped scapulars and wing coverts, and the absence of a dusky shoulder mark all eliminate the Sanderling as a possibility. The larger Pectoral Sandpiper, which has light colored and longer legs, would show streaked, not scaled, upperparts, a less extensive white throat, and would exhibit heavier streaking across the breast -- the streaks extending to a point at the midbreast.

The obviously long wings of the pictured bird (actually seen to cross in both photos) give it a pointed and streamlined appearance that virtually limits the bird to being either Baird's Sandpiper or White-rumped Sandpiper. The absence of either a pronounced eyebrow stripe or conspicuous spots along the flanks, along with the scaly back and wing coverts, serve to remove the White-rumped Sandpiper as a possibility. Consequently, this shorebird can only be a Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*). The broadly margined feathers of the back, scapulars, and wing coverts, as well as the heavy breast wash, all indicate that the bird is a juvenile -- like the vast majority of Baird's Sandpipers seen in Massachusetts. The individual pictured was photographed in September at Plum Island by Alden Clayton.



*Baird's Sandpiper*



*Photos by Alden Clayton*

## AT A GLANCE

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Photo by Roger Everett



Can you identify this bird?

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

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