

Records not accepted

Ross's goose *Chen rossii* 30 November 2003, Hamilton Co.

The distance to this bird was apparently very great and the observer himself was unsure of the identification. For these reasons, the committee voted not to accept this record.

Arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea* 18 August 2004, Erie Co.

The committee felt that several important identification points were excluded from the documentation. These included no details of translucent primaries, an important feature of Arctic tern; overall more details on wing coloration, especially when compared to common and Forster's terns, were desirable. The body shape, typically plumper in Arctic tern, was not mentioned. Although this was a well-written documentation, the lack of the above details did not allow the committee to accept as Arctic tern.

Rufous hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* 31 October - 21 November, Lorain Co.

Although the committee felt that this bird was probably a rufous, individual feathers are difficult to see except in the hand, and although degree of probability suggests rufous is more likely than Allen's, there is not enough to confirm the identification as a rufous.

Recirculated records

Brown pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* 19 September 2003

Glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* 25 October 2004, Medusa Marsh

Tricolored heron *Egretta tricolor* 21 May 2005, Ottawa NWR

Mississippi kite *Ictinia mississippiensis* 1 May 2005, Shawnee SF

Swainson's hawk *Buteo swainsoni* 20 November 2003, Lake Co.

Gyr falcon *Falco rusticolus* 25 January 2005, The Wilds

Yellow rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis* 15 September 2004, Hamilton Co.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* 18 July 2003, Wyandot Co.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 6 September 2003, Wayne Co.

White-winged dove *Zenaida asiatica* 16-19 August 2004, Portage Co.

Length of Migration Stopover of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Ohio

by **Brian Zwiebel**

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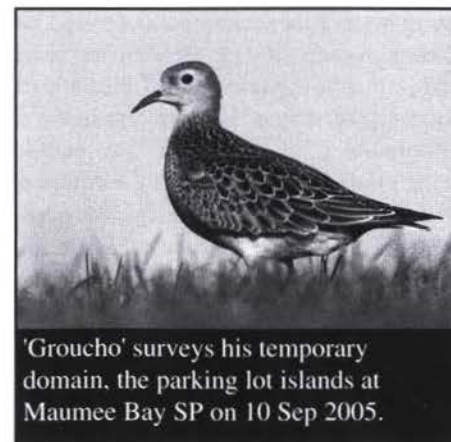
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On 27 August 2005 I was fortunate enough to attend a shorebird symposium presented by the Ohio Ornithological Society, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and the Toledo Naturalists' Association, at Maumee Bay State Park in Lucas County, Ohio. The keynote speaker, Robert Russell, gave a presentation on "Mysteries of Great Lakes Shorebirds." Russell, a wetlands biologist, is currently the Midwest Shorebird Coordinator in the USFWS's Region 3. In his talk, he mentioned that buff-breasted sandpipers *Tryngites subruficollis* are thought to have short migrational stopovers, generally ranging from several hours to two or three days. According to Russell, this estimate is based upon incidental notes of observations in Minnesota. He further states that he knows of no formal stopover studies for buff-breasted sandpipers.

The US Shorebird Conservation Plan (2001), the full text of which is available at

<http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/USShorebird/downloads/USShorebirdPlan2Ed.pdf>, reports on p. 55 the estimated population of this species at 15,000 birds. The 2005 update of the USSCP increases that estimate to 20,000, based in part upon the belief that the species has very short migration stopovers, and hence that observations of birds at a given site represent cohorts of migrants passing through in quicker successions than many other shorebird species.

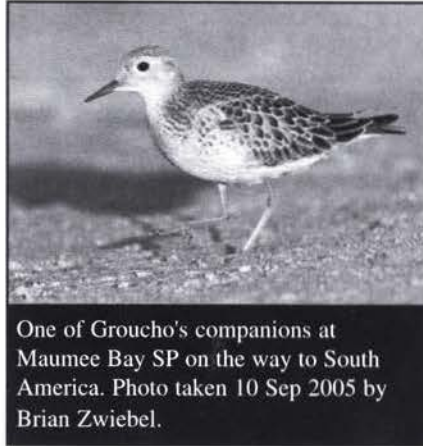
Based on my own observations and those of several other observers during a three-week period at Maumee Bay State Park (MBSP) I hope to demonstrate that the stopover duration for buff-breasted sandpipers as currently understood should be re-evaluated, and that consequently their population may be overestimated in the latest edition of the USSCP. The USSCP states the confidence level of the population estimates for this species to be "low," because data are obtained from broad-scale surveys and estimates. If our



'Groucho' surveys his temporary domain, the parking lot islands at Maumee Bay SP on 10 Sep 2005.

study's results are typical, the numbers may be further flawed based on the thinking that new birds are being counted in surveys taken every two to three days at migrant shorebird survey sites; thus, it is possible that surveyors may be significantly overestimating the total North American population of this species, with consequent underestimations of its conservation needs.

On 28 August, the day after the symposium, I followed up on a report of a single buff-breasted sandpiper at MBSP on the 27th. Upon arriving on the site in the afternoon I observed two birds of this species feeding on moths on a narrow strip of lawn between the parking lot and the beach at the Park. It soon became apparent that one of the birds had a noticeably deformed bill, with an apparent "Roman-nose" appearance, with a drooping tip. This easily recognizable individual was soon affectionately dubbed



One of Groucho's companions at Maumee Bay SP on the way to South America. Photo taken 10 Sep 2005 by Brian Zwiebel.

"Groucho." Groucho remained on the site until at least 15 September, a stopover duration of 19 days, more than six times the reported average length of stay for the species! This prolonged stay also occurred in marginal habitat, 20-foot wide mowed grassy strips separating sections of a large parking lot extensively used by beach visitors at a busy state park in the height of the tourist season. Observers often remarked upon the "tame" character of these birds, not atypical of juvenal birds arriving from remote Arctic breeding grounds who may be encountering human activities for the first time.

Several people have suggested that this individual remained longer at this stopover spot because its deformed bill may have been less effective in capturing insect prey to restore its fat reserves for migration. Since the preferred food source of the several buff-breasted sandpipers present seemed to be live moths captured by active foraging in the short grass, a deformity could perhaps result in less efficient feeding. The moths were often observed escaping capture by the sandpipers present, but the comparative success rates of normal birds vs. Groucho is not known. Groucho was observed eating numerous moths from the lawn, however, and while its bill shape did not seem to be having an obvious effect, it is possible it could have been a factor in feeding efficiency. One might expect a reduced feeding efficiency sufficient to result in a six-fold longer stay than expected would have been apparent to observers, however.

One bird with a bill deformity may not be the best measuring-stick for the stopover duration of any species during migration. Other birds present during the study period should be considered. Of most interest were three other buff-breasted sandpipers in the company of Groucho, present from 2-15

September (except for 9, 12, and 13 September, for which there are no known data). Four buff-breasted sandpipers (Groucho and three others) were present on 11 of 14 days where reliable reports are available. I hypothesize that the stable number of four birds present between 2 and 15 September were actually the same birds each day, and did not represent turnovers of other migrants, which coincidentally totaled four birds each day.

Another point that should be considered is the weather pattern for the 14-day period in question. This period had a relatively mild stretch of weather, with mostly light northerly winds up to 11 mph, and no measurable precipitation. Temperatures were mild, with highs in the mid-60s to mid-70s, and lows in the mid-60s F. There were no strong northerly winds that would have encouraged a southward departure, and no southerly winds that would have unduly deferred it <http://wunderground.com/weatherstation/WXDailyHistory.asp?ID=KOHTOLED4>.

These data suggest that current estimates of the duration of stays at stopover sites of this species may need re-evaluation, especially in light of that fact that new findings may have an impact on estimations of their overall population status. Indeed it is likely that the USSCP estimation of the Buff-breasted sandpiper population may be optimistic at best.

Literature Cited

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