

A Little Stint in Bermuda

Keith Pellow*

During the late afternoon of June 10, 1975, Eric Amos observed an unusual peep at Lukes Farm Pond in Southampton Parish, Bermuda. The bird was in company with twelve typically-plumaged Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*). Initially the bird appeared to be a brightly-colored Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*), having bright rufous upperparts, head and upper breast. The main difference however, was the fact that the bird had dark legs.

After obtaining a detailed description of the bird, Amos left the bird at dusk and informed David Wingate and Keith Pellow of the bird's presence, indicating that it reminded him of a Rufous-necked Stint, (*Calidris ruficollis*), a specimen of which occurred in Bermuda in August 1971.

The following morning both Wingate and Pellow visited the area separately and succeeded in relocating the bird. After obtaining independent notes on the bird, Pellow identified it as a Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*), a species with which he became familiar in Britain. After consultation and studying various field guides, the other observers reached the same conclusion.

From information received later it appears that the bird arrived in the late afternoon of June 8, but was not seen well until June 10.

By dawn on June 12 the Little Stint and nine of the Semipalmated Sandpipers had departed, but not before several photographs had been taken of the stint.

DESCRIPTION

The upperparts were generally very rufous. The dark-centered feathers were edged rufous while those of the mantle were edged with paler feathers giving a very distinct 'V' on the back. The head was a rich brown with a noticeable pale supercilium. The chin was pale. The upper breast was rufous turning to buff in the center but giving the



appearance of a gorget. It was finely streaked, especially at the sides. The lower breast and underparts were white.

The bill was black and appeared shorter and straighter than that of the Semipalmated Sandpiper. The eye appeared black as did the legs.

In its general appearance, the bird seemed to be as big as the smaller Semipalmated Sandpipers but smaller than most of them. It fed very actively, tending to pick its food from the surface rather than probe for it.

Color slides of the bird were subsequently forwarded to D.I.M. Wallace, Chairman of the Rarities Committee in Britain, who replied stating, "I have no real doubt of the identification. A most fascinating record."

The Little Stint is a bird of the west Palearctic. Its normal breeding range is Northern Norway and the islands and coasts of Finland and Northern Russia including the Northern Siberian tundra. It migrates through most of Western Europe in order to reach its winter grounds which are in Africa and India. In Britain, it is a regular visitor in autumn but occurs less frequently in spring. A few individuals occasionally winter there.

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