

## FIRST RECORD FOR THE RUFF IN WASHINGTON STATE

On 4 September 1971 we discovered a Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax*, at Crockett's Lake, near the Keystone ferry landing on Whidbey Island, Washington. The bird was associating with a Dunlin *Erolia alpina* in fading breeding plumage. Both were part of a large mixed-species assemblage of shorebirds that were feeding on the mud flats that border this tidal lagoon. The Ruff remained at Crockett's Lake until at least 19 September, during which time it was studied carefully by many other observers, including Dennis R. Paulson, Edmund T. Stiles, and Terence R. Wahl. The following description is adapted from notes taken at the time of our initial observation.

Upper parts: head tan with pale patch at base of bill; neck tan; back slightly darker, feathers with dark centers; scapulars blackish with light edges; primaries dark. Under parts: under tail coverts and belly pure white; upper breast light brownish with a few dark marks laterally. In flight: faint pale wing-stripe on dark wings, strongest at angle of wing; white of under tail coverts continuous laterally with white at dorso-proximal part of tail region, leaving a thin black line down center; distal half of tail dark. Size: body bulk about that of a dowitcher (*Limnodromus* sp.); neck short and thick in relation to that of a yellowlegs (*Totanus* sp.). Bill: black, slightly longer than head, and very slightly drooped at tip. Legs: carrot-orange; in proportion to body size, shorter than those of a yellowlegs but longer than those of a dowitcher.

When first seen, the Ruff was posturing a few inches from the Dunlin, as follows: legs vertical; body slightly tilted downward anteriorly; neck moderately stretched and tilted downward, with bill tip nearly touching ground; bill angled slightly toward tail; scapulars erect. The Ruff then flew off and fed alone. After ten minutes it returned to the Dunlin, tilted its bill up in "greeting," and immediately assumed the motionless posture. It then fed with the Dunlin for five minutes, at which point the Dunlin darted at the Ruff and flew. Instantly the Ruff followed, and the birds landed and fed together. The scapulars of the Ruff remained erect. Finally, both birds flew and disappeared in a distant portion of the lagoon.

The peculiar rigid pose was similar to the solicitation posture which the male assumes before the female during courtship. It was probably an "autumnal aggressive display" which, according to E. A. Armstrong (Bird Display and Behavior, 1965), is frequent in the Ruff and probably stems from a recrudescence of the hypersexual state of spring. In the fall this state reaches a lower level and produces intimidatory rather than sexual display. We infer, from its behavior, that the bird was a male. Those people who observed the bird subsequently saw neither unusual posturing nor close association with any individual bird.

This appears to be the first record of the Ruff in Washington. Other reports for the west coast of North America are concentrated in two areas: coastal southern California, where the Ruff was first recorded in 1962 (McCaskie, Condor, 65:166-167, 1963; Audubon Field Notes, 17:358, 1963) and has been seen yearly since 1966 (Audubon Field Notes, 21:77 and 458, 1967; 22:90 and 478, 1968; 23:108 and 521, 1969; American Birds, 25:109, 1971); and islands in the Bering Sea, where it is very rare (Gabrielson and Lincoln, Birds of Alaska, 1959; Thompson and DeLong, Bird-Banding, 38:214-218, 1967; Sealy et al. Condor, 73:322-336, 1971). In Canada it has not been recorded west of Saskatchewan (Godfrey, The Birds of Canada, 1966). There are two published records for northern California (McCaskie, *loc.*

## NOTES

*cit.*), the first in 1961, and apparently none for Oregon. The Washington record provides a link in a possible migration (or mismigration) route taken by individuals that breed in arctic Siberia and fly down the eastern rim of the Pacific Ocean. *Laurence C. Binford, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California 94118, and Michael Perrone, Jr., Department of Zoology, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98105.*

