

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Bird name (common & scientific): Pacific golden plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Date & time of sighting: 18 September 1995 ~1:00 PM

Length of time observed: About two minutes, on-off, including ~30 seconds through a Kowa Scope at about 150 - 200 feet (saw it longer than that at a greater distance). The rest of the time I used a pair of 10X Leica binoculars

Number of birds observed: 1

Location: Alkaline mudflat ponds south of Willard Bay, east of Harold S. Crane refuge.

Elevation: ~4215'

Distance to bird: 150 - 200'

Light conditions: Clear, bright sun. Sun was behind bird, about 30 - 50° to the left. My view was SW with scope, and mostly south with binoculars.

Optical equipment: 10x Leicas
Kowa scope with 30x eyepiece

Weather: Clear, sunny

Description of bird:

- Size and general shape of Black-bellied plover, but seemed sleeker, taller (more upright posture) (It may be this posture was due to alarm posture, but alarmed Black-bellied plovers I have seen on 3 continents never looked quite like that). Killdeer next to it was dwarfed.
- Orangy-buff tone to face, breast, and back -- most notably on cheek area and eyestripe. Blackish patch on cheek.
- Bill *approximately* as long as head, thick like plover, dark.
- No dark patch visible under wings in flight (though my view was not ideal due to angle of sun). Underwings buffy??? Shape of wings appeared very long and slender/pointed.
- Back speckled. Breast less so.
- Almost reminded me of Buff-breasted sandpiper in neck/head shape & large, dark eye on buffy face.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: none heard

Behavior:

- Bird flew off farther and farther twice, each time apparently silently and for more than 200 feet.
- When flew to a new spot, it momentarily held up its wings upon landing, in manner of willet.

Habitat: Pickle salt weed and muddy edge of shallow pool in briny area.

Similar species and how these were eliminated:

- Warm, buffy tone on body and, especially, head eliminated other pluvialis plovers. The eyestripe and cheek areas were especially rufousy.
- The cheek spot was very discrete in manner shown in *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide*, plate 32.

Previous experience with this/similar species:

I have never seen this particular species before. I have seen Black-bellied/Grey plovers on three continents on many occasions. Mark Stackhouse & I saw an American golden plover two weeks later up close (~50 - 75 feet) and that bird had different posture and (startlingly different) coloration.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how these influenced this description:

Peterson's *A field Guide to Western Birds*, 3rd ed. -- in the field.

National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, 2nd ed. -- in the field.

Peter Hayman, et al *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide* -- at home, confirmation of decision made in field.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

There are no other confirmed sightings of this recently-split species in Utah to date. Most members of species migrate/winter along California coast or far out at sea.

Additional material (drawing, photograph, tape, DNA sample, corpse, etc.): --

Description from:

1. Notes taken at time of sighting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Notes made later (if so, when)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. From memory	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date this form was prepared: 19 September 1995

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Signature:



Other observers who independently identified this bird: Mark Stackhouse, Laura Lockhart

Report sent to:

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