

# **New Mexico Ornithological Society**

## **Bird Records Committee Submittal Form**

### **New Mexico Rare/Unusual Bird Report**

**1. Species:** Dunlin

**2. Number:** 2

**3. Location:** Bosque del Apache NWR

**4. Date(s):** 12/15/12

**5. Time(s):** 1:30 PM

**6: Reporting observer:**

David L. Hawksworth

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**7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:** None.

**8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:** These birds were also seen on the Christmas Count by Raymond VanBuskirk, Jason Kitting and Nancy Hetrick among others. These birds wintered here and were seen and identified by many, many observers.

**9. Light conditions:** Excellent, the Sun was a right angle to the birds.

**10. Optical equipment:** Observed with 8X40 binoculars and 60X spotting scope.

**11. Distance to bird:** Foraging in the open approximately 25-30 meters away.

**12. Duration of observation:** I watched them for a couple minutes during the count and several other times over the winter.

**13. Habitat:** Large shallow pond with scattered patches of bare ground due to the low water level in the pond.

**14. Behavior:** These birds were actively foraging on a sandbar with several other species of shorebirds, including Least Sandpipers and Killdeer.

**15. Description:** These birds were medium-sized sandpipers, larger than Least Sandpipers, but smaller than Killdeer by direct comparison. They had uniformly pale gray-brown upperparts and wings. The head was also pale gray-brown with an indistinct whitish supercilium. The lower chest, belly and undertail coverts were white. Their chests were light gray (slightly paler than the upperparts) and very slightly streaked. The most noticeable field mark was the relatively long, thin bill with a noticeably decurved tip. The legs were black.

**16. Voice:** They were silent as far as I could tell.

**17. Similar species:** There are a number of shorebird species that are typically found at the Bosque in winter. They were foraging with several Least Sandpipers and the Dunlins were clearly much larger with longer decurved beaks. Long-billed Dowitchers have much longer, larger straight beaks. Greater Yellowlegs are much taller with bright yellow legs. Western Sandpipers (an extremely remote possibility) have paler chests, smaller bills, and less uniformly colored upperparts. No other sandpipers that have decurved bills (such as Stilt Sandpipers) are normally found in New Mexico in the winter.

**18. Photographs?** None by anyone on the count that I know of, but numerous photos are posted online (at ebird.org, for example).

**19. Previous experience with this species:** I have observed this species about 10 or so other times.

**20. Aids:** I used the Sibley Field Guide to confirm identification.

**21. This description written from:** Notes taken at time of observation.

**22. Are you positive of your identification?** Yes, I am.

**23. Signature, date & time report written:**

Dave Hawksworth 12/15/12 9:30 PM (Additional info added on 4/28/13.)