

Semipalmated Sandpipers, a size comparison was easy. In one instance, a Semipalmated Sandpiper in the same field of view almost circled the bird in question. The bird in question was the smaller and appeared to be smaller than the others feeding nearby.

To determine the species of bird, I made some notes at the time to compare with references. The possibilities among the small *Calidris* sandpipers are the Semipalmated, Western, and Least Sandpipers as well as the Little, Rufous-necked, Long-toed, and Temminck's Stints. All of the stints would be very unlikely. The bird in question had an obvious long and curved bill and dark legs thus ruling out the Least Sandpiper, Long-toed Stint, and Temminck's Stint. The scapular pattern, the crown and ear covert colouration, and the obvious flank markings all seem to indicate that the bird was a Western Sandpiper in breeding plumage. The main problems seemed to be my observation of the birds size and a conclusion that the bird was in breeding plumage (definitive alternate). Veit and Jonsson state that birds outside their usual range are most likely to molt in a peculiar pattern and it is felt that most shorebirds finish molting after reaching their wintering grounds. Western Sandpipers are the largest of the possible birds and initially I felt that the bird in question was an aberrant Semipalmated Sandpiper as I had such a good size comparison which seemed to preclude the possibility of it being a Western Sandpiper. On reviewing my notes and available references, I became convinced that this bird was a Western Sandpiper. In Godfrey's *Birds of Canada* there is a table comparing various measurements of Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers which shows an overlap in size between female Semipalmated and male Western Sandpipers. This was also the finding in a paper by Ralph Carter (1984) who had used study skins and collected specimens. Taking everything into consideration, the bird seems to have been a Western Sandpiper.

References:

- Carter, Ralph V. A morphometric comparison of Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers. *Wilson Bull.* 96: 277-286.
- Godfrey, Earl. 1986. *Birds of Canada*. National Museums of Canada, Ottawa.
- Hayman, Peter, John Marchant, and Tony Prater. 1986. *Shorebirds, an Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Kauffman, Ken. 1990. *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Veit, Richard R. and Lars Jonsson. 1987. Field Identification of Smaller Sandpipers within the Genus *Calidris*. *American Birds* 41: 213-237.
- Zimmer, Kevin J. 1985. *The Western Birdwatcher: An introduction to birding in the American West*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

ANIMAL AND PLANT SIGHTINGS

Snowfleas covered water-filled foot tracks at Cavendish on October 23 (JDM)

Red maple leaves started changing colour in low areas in mid-September. Full broad-leaved deciduous colour developed by late September. Leaves stayed on the trees for a prolonged period until October 16th in central P.E.I. Larch leaves changed colour on October 23 -25 in Donagh.

Eastern Chipmunks - 6 coming to door for peanuts at Indian River in late September; 1 at Donagh feeder throughout September & October (JDM)

