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**First Specimen Record of the Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)
for North America**

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The Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) breeds in the north-central Palaearctic, from northeastern Norway to the central Russian arctic as far as the Indigirka River at 150°E (Dement'ev et al. 1969); it has also recently been reported to breed in some years eastwards to the Chukchi Peninsula (Glutz et al. 1975). It winters mainly in Africa and eastwards to southern Asia (Vaurie 1965, Glutz et al. 1975). Its general distribution is, thus, far removed from the Nearctic, and the only records from this region to date are photographic ones involving single birds on Bermuda in 1975 (Pellow 1976) and near Barrow, Alaska in 1976 (Myers and Greenberg 1978), as well as several sight records from Antigua in 1975 and 1976 (Holland and Williams 1978, E. Eisenmann pers. comm.). This note reports the first record of the species for Canada and the collection of the first specimen for North America.

On 10 July 1979, I noted a small *Calidris* sandpiper, with bright rufous plumage on the upper parts, head, neck, and upper breast, with a small group of Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*) near North Point (51°29'N, 80°27'W), on the southwest coast of James Bay, 27 km northeast of Moosonee, Ontario. The birds were feeding on the short grass ("goose grass," *Puccinellia phryganodes* (Trin.) Scribn. & Merr.) salt marsh and around pools near the junction of the vegetated area with the tidal flats. The sandpiper's field characters—particularly the conspicuous orange-rufous wash on the head, cheeks, nape, and sides of the neck that spreads across the upper area of the breast below the throat to form a gorget; the rich rufous upper parts (with a somewhat indistinct "V" marking); the black legs; the black, fine, almost straight bill; and the similar but slightly smaller size than that of the nearby Semipalmated

Sandpipers—immediately eliminated all the common or likely North American species and indicated the possibility of its being a Little Stint. I collected the bird. In the hand, the above characters, lack of palmations, and diagnostic features separating it from the Rufous-necked Sandpiper (*C. ruficollis*), including white throat, wing/tarsus ratio of 4.55 (see Prater et al. 1977), and wing/bill ratio of 5.17 (see Glutz et al. 1975), confirmed that the bird was a Little Stint, as have subsequent detailed examination of the plumage and comparison with other specimens. Measurements taken on the freshly collected bird included wing length (maximum chord), 100 mm; bill length (tip to start of feathers), 19.35 mm; bill width, 1.8 mm; tarsus length, 22.0 mm; middle toe with claw, 20.5 mm; and weight, 24.5 g. The specimen has been deposited in the National Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa, Catalogue No. 68651.

The bird was in full nuptial plumage, there was little body molt present, and its flight feathers were only moderately worn, suggesting it was an adult at least 2 and possibly more yr of age (see Prater et al. 1977). Dissection showed the bird was a male. The partially regressed testes (length 6 mm, cf. McLean 1969 for *C. pusilla*) and full nuptial plumage indicate the Little Stint was in breeding condition.

The majority of sightings of the Little Stint in the Nearctic have involved vagrants seen in full nuptial plumage during the summer (Bermuda, 10–12 June 1975; Alaska, 28 June 1976) or early during the autumn migration period (Antigua, 23 July 1976; James Bay, 10 July 1979). At this time of the year, the bright rufous plumage of the Little Stint provides a conspicuous contrast with the plumage of the common North American species. Separation of the Little Stint and Rufous-necked Sandpiper by observers unfamiliar with either species, however, requires particularly close observational and photographic documentation for establishment of acceptable sight records. Problems of identification increase with molting adults and especially first-autumn or winter plumage birds (see Wallace 1974, 1979), and the extent to which immature birds occur in North America remains unknown. But it is now clear that small numbers of adult Little Stints, as well as the more regular Rufous-necked Sandpiper, reach North America.

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