

imately 15 miles east of Malua—on January 26th and 27th. We determined to our satisfaction that it was the same individual when we drove at once to the Malua location and did not find it there.

On January 26, we were accompanied by two touring Canadian Wildlife Service Biologists, Ragni Askevold and Brian Keating, and we all concluded it was "an immature gull of some type." Without more accurate sources for identification, we were not prepared to go beyond that. We also photographed it on several other occasions. The bird appeared content and had a ready source of fish available. It was totally unfamiliar to the Samoans nearby and they simply identified it as a "Tuli", the name applied to *all* shorebirds by the Samoans.

ON FEBRUARY 9, Terry Teppen, a Peace Corps volunteer with a Master's degree in biology, observed the bird with us. He confirmed the sightings, but could offer no more concrete identity. We last observed the bird, healthy and well fed, on February 27, 1980 as we drove to the airport prior to our departure.

Upon arrival in Walla Walla, Washington, we contacted several known ex-

perts at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (George E. Watson), Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute in San Diego (Joseph Jehl), Buffalo Museum of Science, New York (Robert F. Andrlé), Guy McCaskie, California, and John Weber, Washington State University. We provided them with color slides of the bird and copies of our field notes. The consensus is that the gull was a first-winter-plumaged Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). In overall size and shape, bill shape and size, mantle coloration, eye ring, white on the head, primary color and tail and rump pattern it agrees with available literature and museum specimens of this bird.

The gull was observed about 8000 km from its nearest breeding area in Southern California and since it is not an oceanic species, this should make our observation one of great interest.

The Samoan Islands should continue to provide both the professional ornithologist and the amateur birdwatcher excellent opportunities to do interesting field work and also record exciting possible "first" sightings.

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Possible sighting of an Eskimo Curlew in Guatemala

Kathy Zedekar, Phyllis Thompson and Frances Thompson

ON NOVEMBER 19, 1977 a birdwatching group from the Sacramento Audubon Society visited the Pacific lowlands of Guatemala. We rented a boat near the resort of Likin, and went south on Canal de Chiquimulilla.

Suddenly a lone bird flew over the boat. The bird was obviously a curlew but definitely not a Whimbrel, with which we were familiar. After it passed our boat it flew back and circled, affording us a good chance to study it. The bird was small—about a foot in length; very buffy underneath, with the upper

parts darker. There were no distinct markings on the head. It did not fly high enough for us to see the undersurface of the wings. The bill was short—about two or three inches long and slightly decurved. The leg color was not observed. The bird flew into a cove and onto a grassy field. We turned around and went back, but did not see the bird again.

We used our reference in the field, Hugh Land's "Birds of Guatemala", 1970. On pages 97-98 he describes the Eskimo Curlew, Long-billed Curlew, and the Whimbrel. The Eskimo Curlew

was reported at San Geronimo, Guatemala, by Slavin (Slavin and Godman, 1879-1904. *Biol. Cent. Am. Aves* 1-3.) His sighting (in April) was inland and northeast of Likin. We feel certain that the bird we saw was not a Long-billed Curlew or a Whimbrel.

The possibility that this bird was the Asian Little Curlew (*Numenius minutus*) seems unlikely, but it can not be ruled out.

—Sacramento Audubon Society, Sacramento, CA.