

## First record of Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) for Peru and continental South America

Wayne R. Petersen, Paul K. Donahue, and Natasha Atkins

**T**HE DUNLIN IS A circumpolar arctic-boreal breeder whose New World range extends from northern Alaska, extreme northern Mackenzie, and southern Somerset Island south along the west coast of Alaska and northern Mackenzie to Southampton Island. It also breeds locally along the west and south coasts of Hudson Bay, as well as in Greenland. The winter range extends from southwestern British Columbia on the Pacific coast to southern Baja California and the coast of Sonora. It also occurs in winter on the Gulf coast from Tamaulipas in eastern Mexico to Texas and eastward to include the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Florida (A.O.U. Check-list 1957). The Dunlin's wintering

range is notable in that the vast majority of the Nearctic population remains in the warmer parts of the North Temperate Zone, with only a few entering the tropics (Stout 1967).

The status of the Dunlin beyond the normal southern limits of its winter range is that of a casual or very rare vagrant. Bond (1980) lists West Indian records from Barbados, New Providence, Great Inagua, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Dominica, and St. Lucia. There is a single record from Nicaragua (Eisenmann 1955), and more recently, the species has been recorded and collected in Costa Rica December 26-27, 1975 and February 8, 1976 (Stiles and Smith 1977). Stiles (pers. comm.) also recorded a sin-

gle bird in a flock of Western Sandpipers (*C. mauri*) on January 10, 1980. In Panama, Wetmore (1965) describes three observations of birds that he identifies as this species in 1955 and 1956. He adds, however, "Since Panama is so far beyond the recorded range I include these as not wholly definite, pending the capture of specimens." Ridgely (1976) adds an additional account of three birds seen and one photographed in Panama on January 19-24, 1977 (Greensmith 1977).

With this background in mind, the authors wish to report the first Dunlin records for Peru, and apparently for continental South America. On August 31, 1978, while birding at the Bay of Paracas, Department of Ica, on the Pacific coast of Peru about 240 km south of Lima, Donahue and Petersen carefully observed a Dunlin in breeding (alternate) plumage. The bird was resting when first noticed, but flushed upon being approached. As it flew, it uttered a single, grating, "cheezp", a note that was instantly familiar to both observers. The dorsal coloration of the bird was prominently rusty-orange, however the plumage did not appear fresh. The white underparts retained the blackish belly

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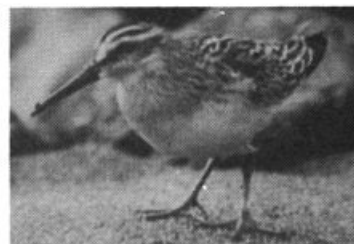
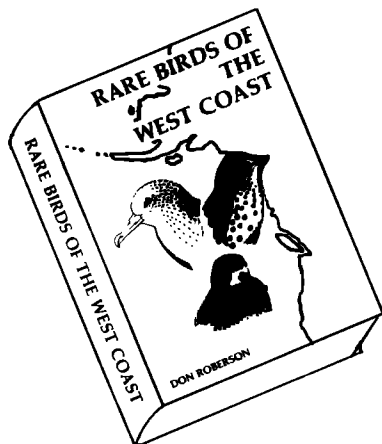
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patch characteristic of the species in breeding, or partial breeding, plumage. The bird's bill was noticeably longer than that of other adjacent small *Calidris* sandpipers and was conspicuously drooped at the tip. In flight, the wings displayed a prominent white wing stripe for much of their length while the tail was dusky-centered with paler outer rectrices which showed whitish areas laterally at the base of several of the outer feathers. There was no suggestion of the white rump typical of Curlew Sandpiper (*C. ferruginea*), a species recorded in Peru in 1976 (Graves and Plenge 1978). Present in the area with the Dunlin were varying numbers of Semipalmated Plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), Whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*), Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), Sanderlings (*C. alba*), Semipalmated Sandpipers (*C. pusilla*), Western Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers (*C. minutilla*), and a variety of other species in small numbers.

UPON RETURNING TO the United States, Donahue and Petersen learned that between May 30 and July 7, 1978, Atkins and David Duffy had observed one to two Dunlins, also in breeding plumage, in the same area of Paracas Bay where the August observation was made. These individuals were seen both feeding and roosting with other shorebirds present in the area at the time. The composition of shorebirds during the early austral winter included numbers of Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, and "peep," along with smaller numbers of other North American migrants.

In 1979, Atkins observed a Dunlin in winter (basic) plumage at Sequion, a nearby bay to the south of the 1978 location, on January 21, 24, and 25. On August 27, 1979, Donahue and Petersen observed a similarly-plumaged bird at the original 1978 location. This bird was well studied as in 1978, and special effort was made to note the upper tail coverts in flight to eliminate possible confusion with Curlew Sandpiper in corresponding plumage. The coverts of the upper tail were gray, similar to the overall dorsal coloration. No trace of a dusky belly patch was seen, however there was a band of distinct streaks across the mid-breast. A pale superciliary stripe was present and the leg color was blackish.

It is possible that the Dunlin records in Peru may refer to the same bird(s) over the course of two seasons: spring 1978-fall 1979. However, in light of the

fact that the west coast of Peru constitutes an important North American shorebird stopover and wintering area, it is not improbable that an occasional Dunlin might overshoot more traditional wintering quarters to the north, particularly if it were migrating with species bound for South America. As for the presence of Dunlins in Peru throughout the summer of 1978, it is not uncommon for various North American shorebirds to remain on the wintering grounds throughout the northern summer, or to accomplish only a partial and incomplete spring migration. Undoubtedly, this behavior is most frequent among one-year old birds. Regrettably, none of the Paracas birds were able to be satisfactorily aged.

As increasing numbers of ornithologists and birding tour groups cover coastal South America, it is likely that other vagrant shorebirds will be recorded at such favored gathering areas as Paracas, and indeed, they should be watched for closely.

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