

## **The First Record of Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*) in British Columbia.**

**By Rick Tootchin and Don Cecile. Submitted: April 15, 2018.**

### **Introduction and Distribution**

The Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*) is a small sandpiper that is found breeding in forest-tundra and on sparse grasslands such as those backing on beaches, along lakes and rivers from Siberia, in the Northern Yakutia, Chukotka and Koryakia regions east, across Russia to Scandinavia and Scotland (Brazil 2009, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). This is a highly migratory species that uses mudflats and coastal wetlands, but favours inland freshwater wetlands, pools and marshes (Brazil 2009, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). Spring migration occurs March and April and mid-May into early June, with the migration peak mid-April and mid-May (Hayman *et al.* 1986, O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Birds breeding in Europe arrive on breeding grounds in the second half of May and birds breeding in Siberia arrive on their breeding grounds in late May into early June (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). The fall migration period takes place in early July and extends into early November (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Adult birds leave the breeding grounds July and August, before the young have fledged (Hayman *et al.* 1986, O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Adult numbers peak throughout temperate Europe from late July through August (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Adult birds arrive on the wintering grounds from August through September, with the majority of birds appearing in September (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Juvenile birds head south from their natal grounds in the first half of August and have been recorded passing through Europe and Turkey through late September and early October (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). The juvenile birds arrive on the wintering grounds a bit later than the adults with this period extending into early November (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). The Temminck's Stint winters in varying numbers from southern China, Taiwan, Japan, with the bulk of the population wintering from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, parts of Indonesia, Burma, Bangladesh, India, Greece, Nile River basin, Arabian Peninsula, and west Africa (Hayman *et al.* 1986, Message and Taylor 2005, O'Brien *et al.* 2006). Vagrants have been found on the Azores, Canary Islands, and East Africa through Zambia, the Seychelles, the Maldives, the Philippines, and Borneo (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

The only region in North America that this species occurs with any frequency is Alaska where the Temminck's Stint is a very rare spring and casual fall migrant in the Western and Central Aleutian Islands, the Pribilof Islands, also both St. Matthew and St. Lawrence Islands (West 2008). Elsewhere in the state, this species is a casual vagrant along the North Coastal region with records from Barrow and the Colville River Delta (West 2008). South of Alaska, the Temminck's Stint is an accidental vagrant with photographed fall records for British Columbia (Campbell *et al.* 1990b) and Ocean Shores, in Grays Harbor County, on November 9-10, 2005

(Mlodinow *et al.* 2006). There are no confirmed records of Temminck's Stint for Oregon (OFO 2016) or for California (Hamilton *et al.* 2007, Tietz and McCaskie and 2017)

### **Identification and Similar Species**

The identification of the Temminck's Stint is covered in most standard North American field guides. This is a small sandpiper that is overall slightly larger than a Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*), but has an elongated and stocky-body shape, is short-legged and has a tail that projects longer than the folded primary tips (Jonsson 1992). Please read Veit and Larsson (1984), Paulson (2005) for an in-depth description of the Least Sandpiper. The Temminck's Stint measures 12-14 cm, with a wingspan of 28.5-31.5 cm, and weighs 24 grams (Jonsson 1992, Paulson 2005). This species is found as a single or in small flocks even where they are commonly found (Jonsson 1992, Paulson 2005). The Temminck's Stint feeds high on the mudflats or in marsh vegetation which is also favoured by the Least Sandpiper (Jonsson 1992, Paulson 2005). This species creeps along the edge of vegetated marshes and tends to occur at small water bodies (Jonsson 1992, Paulson 2005, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). When flushed the Temminck's Stint rises rapidly and jerkily upwards normally calling constantly (Jonsson 1992). Like any small "peep", understanding how to age a suspected a bird is the first step in securing the identification (Veit and Jonsson 1984).

Adults acquire breeding plumage through a partial molt including most body feathers, wing-coverts, and central tail feathers, between the months February to May (Veit and Jonsson 1984). In breeding plumage the upper-parts are often variable, mixed with a mixture of grey winter-type feathers and summer feathers, which have a blackish-centre, with pale chestnut fringes and off-white tips (Message and Taylor 2005). The sides of the neck are mottled buff and grey-brown, with darker streaks and the rest of the under-parts are white (Message and Taylor 2005, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). The bill is small with a thick base and thinner tip (Message and Taylor 2005). There is a distinct white eye-ring around the dark eye (Larsson 1992, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). In flight, wings are dark with a distinct white wing strip (Larsson 1992, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). The outer tail feathers are white from the base to the tip with the central section of the tail dark (Larsson 1992, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). The legs are yellow-tinged (Message and Taylor 2005).

Adults acquire basic (also called winter) plumage by a complete molt of the body plumage from July to September (Veit and Jonsson 1984). The primary molt might be arrested and then completes in April (Veit and Jonsson 1984). Birds in winter plumage are overall a uniformly dull dark neutral grey-brown on upperparts and breast, with a pure white belly and vent (Message and Taylor 2005). The uniformity of the colouration on the breast gives birds in this plumage a hooded appearance (Veit and Jonsson 1984). The bill is dark with a light base to the bill (O'Brien

*et al.* 2006). There is a distinct white eye-ring around dark eyes (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). The legs and feet are yellowish (Message and Taylor 2005).

Juvenile plumage is the most distinct of all the plumages for this species (Veit and Jonsson 1984). There are dark sub-terminal bars and buff fringes on the mantle (Veit and Jonsson 1984). The sub-terminal bars on the uppermost scapulars are the broadest, producing a dark-spotted effect (Veit and Jonsson 1984, Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). There is an olive cast to the entire plumage, and the feathers also lack extensive dark centers (Veit and Jonsson 1984, Hayman *et al.* 1986). The head is uniform, lacking any distinct pattern (Veit and Jonsson 1984, Hayman *et al.* 1986). There is a pale supercilium that extends slightly beyond the eye (Veit and Jonsson 1984). There is a darkish line from the base of the bill to the eye (Jonsson 1992, Message and Taylor 2005). Around the eye, as in other ages, there is a distinct white eye-ring (Paulson 2005). There is a brownish wash on the upper breast that extends down the sides of the neck (Larsson 1992, Paulson 2005). The breast and vent is white (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The legs are yellow-tinged (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

The Temminck's Stint, when flushed into flight, makes a distinct, loud, dry trilling sound, usually patterned "*tirrr-tirrr-tirrr*" (Mullarney and Zetterstrom 2009). This is very obvious and different from all regularly occurring North American Sandpipers (Veit and Jonsson 1984).

### **Occurrence and Documentation**

The Temminck's Stint is an accidental vagrant in British Columbia with a single photographed record of a juvenile bird found at the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, in Ladner, September 1-4, 1982 (Kautesk *et al.* 1983, Campbell *et al.* 1990b). The timing of the Temminck's Stint at the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, in Ladner fits perfectly into the fall migration pattern of juvenile birds (O'Brien *et al.* 2006). This particular bird frequented a brackish slough in the sanctuary, which was one kilometer in length by 6-9 meters in width (Kautesk *et al.* 1983). The Temminck's Stint was in the company of a small mixed flock of Least Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers (*Calidris mauri*), Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*), and several Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) (Kautesk *et al.* 1983). The stint was often seen keeping close company with a Least Sandpiper that afforded close comparisons for the observers (Kautesk *et al.* 1983). Incredibly, close-up photographs were taken by several observers, including photographs of the bird in the direct company of a juvenile Least Sandpiper, which helped to document this extraordinary record (Kautesk *et al.* 1983, Paulson 1995, Campbell *et al.* 1990b).

Keen observers should watch for this species from July through early December in appropriate habitat in well-known shorebird vagrant traps anywhere in British Columbia. It is likely another bird that will eventually be found somewhere in the province in the future.

## **Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Barbara McKee for editing the manuscript.

## **References**

- Brazil, M. 2009. Birds of East Asia: China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and Russia. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 528pp.
- Campbell, R.W., N. K. Dawe, I. McTaggart-Cowan, J. M. Cooper, G. W. Kaiser, and M. C. E. McNall. 1990b. The Birds of British Columbia – Volume 2 (Nonpasserines [Diurnal Birds of Prey through Woodpeckers]). Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum.
- Hamilton, R. A., M. A. Patten, and R. A. Erickson. 2007. Rare Birds of California: A work of the California rare bird record committee. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, California. 605pp.
- Hayman, P., J. Marchant and T. Prater. 1986. Shorebirds: An identification guide to the waders of the world. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 412pp.
- Jonsson, L. 1992. Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 559pp.
- Kautesk, B. M., R. E. Scott, D. S. Aldcroft and J. Ireland. 1983. Temminck's Stint at Vancouver, British Columbia. *American Birds* 37(3): 347-349.
- Message, S. and D. Taylor. 2005. Shorebirds of North America, Europe and Asia: A Guide to Identification. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Mlodinow, B. Tweit, and D. Irons. 2006. The Fall season: August through November 2005: Oregon and Washington. *North American Birds* 60(1): 126-132.
- Mullarney, K. and D. Zetterstrom. 2009. Birds of Europe. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 448pp.
- O'Brien, M., R. Crossley, and K. Karlson. 2006. The Shorebird Guide. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York. 477pp.
- OFO. 2016. Oregon Field Ornithologists - Records Committee. [Online resource] <http://www.oregonbirds.org/index.html>. [Accessed: December 31, 2016].

Paulson, D. 2005. Shorebirds of North America: The Photographic Guide. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 362pp

Tietz, J. and G. McCaskie. 2017. Update to Rare Birds of California: 1 January 2004 – 3 January 2017. [Online Resource] Retrieved from [http://www.californiabirds.org/cbrc\\_book/update.pdf](http://www.californiabirds.org/cbrc_book/update.pdf) [Accessed: January 18, 2017].

Veit, R. R. and L. Jonsson. 1984. Field Identification of smaller sandpipers within the genus *Calidris*. American Birds 38(5): 853-876.

West, G. C. 2008. A Birder's Guide to Alaska. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO. 586 pp.