BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee
Unusual Record Report Form

Section A: Submitter details	
Your name(s) **Joint submissions are fine**	Tim Nickholds
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names **Include subspecies if relevant**	Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*)
Site location **(with GPS if possible)**	Reef Island Nature Conservation Reserve, Western Port Bay, Victoria
Date(s) and time(s) of record **(First and last date of occurrence if known)**	Originally sighted 16/11/2017, present until 7/12/2017
How many individuals were there?	A single individual associating with approximately 15 Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*)
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	The distance of the bird was variable as it was seen in flight as it circled around the northern section of the island, closest estimate being approximately 50m, but fortunately still close enough to view diagnostic black underwing coverts and axillaries in flight
Habitat description	Reef Island Nature Conservation Reserve is part of the Western Port Ramsar site and as part of its strategic management plan was identified by the Victorian Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) as an important high tide roost. The island itself is a small, sparsely vegetated, rocky isthmus/island intersected with intertidal mudflats which become exposed during low tide. A patch of White Mangroves (*Avicennia marina australasica*) occur on the northern/north eastern shoreline and (Serrated?) tussocks dominate the narrow sandy sections found at the islands highest and westernmost points. During low tide the island becomes accessible on foot as the isthmus becomes exposed, small rocky outcrops on the islands edges also become exposed, and utilised by various waders and cormorants as roosts. The surrounding coastline predominantly rocky substrate interspaced with patches of rocky coastline and small intertidal mudflats that become exposed at low tides. Vegetation beyond the hightide line is dominated by introduced agricultural grasses and Saltbush (*Atriplex* sp.), and an extensive patch of Bracken Fern (*Pteridium esculentum*) occurs at the head of the isthmus
Sighting conditions **(e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)**	Bright and sunny, temperature in the mid to high 20's, humidity high. Excellent visibility despite strong heat haze
How confident are you in the identification	100%

(as a %) and why?	
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	This individual had originally been reported to Birdline Victoria (and subsequently forwarded to the Birdline Victoria Facebook page) by Keith Calecott and Jeff Maltman on the 16/11/2017. The image forwarded to both Birdline Victoria and the Birdline Victoria Facebook page leaves no doubt that the individual was indeed a Hudsonian Godwit
What experience have you had with this species?	My only prior experience with this species is with a single observation of a well reported bird at Lake Wollumboola during December 2015 (BARC Case No. 896)
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	To date this is the first record of this species in Western Port Bay, with all other Victorian records being on the western side of Port Phillip Bay, including BARC Case numbers 512 and 592
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	Discussion, including as images of the original sighting: https://www.facebook.com/groups/BirdlineVictoria/permalink/1890707884578925/ Follow up records and images, via eBird, e.g.: https://ebird.org/checklist/S40919797 Follow up record and image showing the extent of pale fringing around coverts and secondaries: https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S40920108
Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)	Yes

You may choose to delete or ignore this page, but please include as much of the requested information in your submission as possible, especially Sections C and E.

Section C: Supporting evidence
Please include evidence that supports the identification, such as photographs, video, call recordings, etc. Digital images can be pasted into this document below, at the end, or provided separately. Digital video and sound recordings can be sent separately to this form. Label photos etc or insert captions to make note of relevant features they show.

Figure 1. Distant record shot of Hudsonian Godwit (bottom left) showing diagnostic black underwing coverts, with Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots

Figure 2. Cropped image of Figure 1 showing the Hudsonian Godwit (bottom left) in direct comparison to Bar-tailed Godwits

Section D: Description of the bird(s)	
Please provide a description of the bird(s) including all identification features recorded. Provide all possible details that might corroborate the identification.	
Plumage	As my personal observations of this Hudsonian Godwit were comparatively distant to those that followed up my sighting, the descriptions on the bird's plumage, appearance, etc. will be largely based off the available media of bird (via eBird and Facebook) that were taken in the days following my sighting. Compared to the Hudsonian Godwit I observed at Lake Wollumboola in Dec 2015, this individual was strikingly non uniform. Obvious pale fringes were observed on the coverts and secondaries and a dark leading edge along the primaries could be observed when bird was roosting. The uniform, dark grey along the scapular, mantle and back contrasted with a colder grey tone around the face (excluding the supercilium), neck and breast. The belly and vent were largely white with patches of grey around the flanks and faded streaking on the undertail coverts. Underwings showed diagnostic black axillaries and underwing coverts, with a narrow white wing bar. It was not observed to be in any visible primary moult nor was any primary moult undertaken whilst observed at the site.
Bare parts	None except for bill and legs
Moult details	The combination of pale fringing to coverts and secondaries in contrast with the dark grey mantle, back and scapulars appear to suggest a juvenile bird beginning to moult into basic non-breeding plumage.
Structure and 'jizz'	The general structure was, more or less, identical to the Bar-tailed Godwits that is was in flight with, with the major differences being the solid black tail with clean white rump and black underwing coverts
Calls	Unfortunately, when the mixed flock flew in, they did so silently, so I was unable to hear any calls
Behaviours	The Hudsonian Godwit was using the site as a high tide roost, opting to roost typically around the northern areas of the island until the tide forced it to roost at the spit of the isthmus, during this time it was observed primarily roosting and stretching with no active feeding observed
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	With the extent of the pale fringes along the secondaries and coverts, in combination with the darker grey along the mantle, back and scapulars, it is likely that this Hudsonian Godwit was a juvenile however, I am not be able to determine gender

Section E: Confusion species

Please indicate other species that the bird(s) might be confused with and how they can be eliminated

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*):

- Black-tailed Godwit can be most readily eliminated, by the obvious black underwing coverts and axillaries that this bird showed in flight, this bird also showed a narrow white wing bar, which in Black-tailed is significantly broader
- The Black-tailed Godwit has a straight bill and lacks the faint upcurve that was present in this bird
- The supercilium of a Black-tailed Godwit is a narrow, whereas this bird had a broader supercilium that bulged towards the lores

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*):

- A Bar-tailed Godwit has dark chevrons on the sides of the upperparts extending down towards the flanks and undertail coverts. Whilst faint streaking was present on the undertail coverts of this bird, the upperparts were largely uniform grey

with some grey patches on the flanks

- A Bar-tailed Godwit has, as its name implies, has a heavily barred tail and rump. This bird possessed a solid black tail contrasting with a clean white rump. Whilst a pale rump may be observed in Bar-tailed Godwit ssp. *menzbieri* it is less clean and leads up toward the back of the bird forming a white triangle, whereas the white rump in this bird had a distinct cut off at the base of the back
- A Bar-tailed Godwits underwing is heavily barred, whereas this bird had black underwing coverts and axillaries with a narrow white wing bar
- Bar-tailed Godwits appears mottled with white edges to the feathers along the neck back and flight feathers, this mottling may appear grey-brown in non-breeding birds or black in juvenile or breeding plumage birds giving a chequered, or scaly appearance. This bird did possess mottling and pale edges to the secondaries and coverts; however, this did not extend to the neck, back or mantle, which was plain grey by comparison, darker on the mantle and back and paler on the neck

Section F: References and aids	
Did you use books, journal articles or on-line sites or pages to help you prepare this submission ? Which ones?	Agriculture Victoria, March 2020, Victorian Resources Online, viewed 24/4/20, http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/vrohome The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2020, eBird, viewed 1/5/20, https://ebird.org/map/hudgod?neg=true&env.minX=&env.minY=&env.maxX=&env.maxY=&zh=false&gp=false&ev=Z&mr=1-12&bmo=1&emo=12&yr=all&byr=1900&eyr=2020 Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2003, Western Port Ramsar Site Strategic Management Plan, viewed 21/5/20, https://www.water.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/53857/Western-Port-Ramsar-Site-Strategic-Management-Plan-SMP.pdf Facebook, 2020, 'Birdline Victoria' group, viewed 24/4/20, https://www.facebook.com/groups/BirdlineVictoria/search/?query=hudsonian&epa=SEARCH_BOX Menkhorst, P. Rogers, D. Clarke, R. Davies, J. Marsack, P. Franklin, K. 2017, *The Australian Bird Guide*, CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South
Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission ?	I would like to acknowledge the original finders of this bird, Keith Calecott and Jeff Maltman. Without their original sighting, this significant record may have gone completely undetected