

## BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee

### Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission to document a major rare bird in Australia. Its use is NOT mandatory. Please attach and/or include all relevant information including any digital images. Please Email the completed form/submission to the BARC Chair, Tony Palliser [tonyp@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tonyp@bigpond.net.au)

BARC considers submissions that include a minimum of the submitter's name(s), the bird species claimed and the location and date(s) of the record. However, more information and evidence will usually be required for BARC to accept a record. So, please submit as much detailed information about the bird as possible.

If you choose not to use this form please make sure all relevant information requested in this form is included in your submission. However, it is our preference that you fully complete sections "A" and "B", or follow their headings, so that BARC has some continuity between all submissions.

Section A: Submitter details	
Your name(s) Joint submissions are fine	Jon Spicer-Bell
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Lesser Yellowlegs – <i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Ash Island, Newcastle, NSW GPS: -32.865550, 151.722593
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	24/09/2020 photographed inadvertently at 12:08 24/09/2020 viewed and photographed from 16:40 At time of writing the bird was seen well throughout the following day (25/09/20) but hasn't been seen since.
How many individuals were there?	1
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	Initially ~350m, then as close as ~15m
Habitat description	Shallow (depth estimated at ~5cm) wetlands fringed by saltmarsh
Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	Visibility was clear, no obstructing vegetation or other obstacles. Patchy cloud and strong winds. Observations ~1 hour before sunset. A spotting scope was used to locate the bird, then at closer range 10x42 binoculars and a DSLR camera with 100-400mm lens was used.
How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	100% due to the clear views and reasonable photographs obtained of the bird showing its field characteristics.
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	I had arrived at Ash Island around 12 midday on the day to photograph Whiskered Terns. Later that day while at home I was processing the images and noticed the bird in question in the background of some of the photos. However, the images of the bird were of very poor quality (distant and out-of-focus).  My initial ID was leaning towards Marsh Sandpiper, however I was not satisfied with this identification (specifically due to the dark colouration) and so decided to seek advice from the Facebook Australian Bird Identification page. There were suggestions of Lesser

	<p>Yellowlegs and Stilt Sandpiper.</p> <p>After seeing these comments, I went back out to site and re-located the bird obtaining closer and clearer observations and photographs, and I was satisfied with identifying it as a Lesser Yellowlegs.</p> <p>Since then the bird has been viewed and identified by other members of the birding community, as per Facebook posts and eBird records.</p>
What experience have you had with this species?	Zero experience before this observation.
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	Yes, reported to me by Mick Roderick – 1x bird at almost the same spot in September 2001.
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	Yes, Facebook Australian Twitchers page and Facebook Australian Bird Identification page. Note due to technical issues the link for both these posts is attached in a separate file.
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.

<b>Section C: Supporting evidence</b>	
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.	
See attached images. The only editing I did was cropping of the original RAW files.	
Image 01 – initial image showing bird in background, at distance and out-of-focus. The dark plumage is notable, along with thin straight bill. A White-headed Stilt is nearby and at similar distance for scale comparison.	
Image 02 – showing yellow legs, bill structure and colour, upperparts plumage, and wing tips extending past tail.	
Image 03 – showing short supercilium not extending past eye, yellow legs, bill structure and colour, upperparts plumage, and wing tips extending past tail.	
Image 04 – in flight image unfortunately out-of-focus but showing white rump not extending up into back and barring on tail.	
Image 05 – in flight image unfortunately out-of-focus but showing underwing pattern.	

<b>Section D: Description of the bird(s)</b>	
Please provide a description of the bird(s) including all identification features recorded. Provide all possible details that might corroborate the identification.	
Plumage	Grey-brown upperparts with white spots, grey-brown mottling/streaking extending around collar towards breast. Short supercilium not extending past eye. When in flight white rump visible that does not extend up into the back. Tail is barred.
Bare parts	Bill slender, long and straight, black with yellow base. Legs yellow.
Moult details	Non-breeding plumage more prevalent than breeding plumage.
Structure and 'jizz'	Wingtips when at rest extended notably past the tail. Bird appeared "dainty". White-headed Stilts and a Red-necked Avocet were nearby, and this bird was notably smaller approximately ~60% the size of the Stilts and Avocet.
Calls	No calls were noted.
Behaviours	During first set of photographs the bird was moving along through the shallows, likely foraging.

	During second set of photographs and observations the bird was mostly stationary with bill tucked into plumage. It took flight once, possibly due to a raptor moving overhead, with a buoyant flight landing a short distance (~1-2m) away and resuming roosting behaviour.
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	Unknown

<b>Section E: Confusion species</b>	
Please indicate other species that the bird(s) might be confused with and how they can be eliminated	
<p>Combination of diagnostic features (Wingtips extending past tail, short supercilium not extending past eye, yellow legs, breast colouration, white spots on upperparts, and back/rump/tail pattern in flight) observed eliminate all below species, but see below for additional comments for other species from genus <i>Tringa</i></p> <p>Wandering/Grey-tailed Tattler – Larger and stockier, rump is not white. Tail is not barred.</p> <p>Nordmann's/Common Greenshank – Larger and stockier, bill bulkier and up-turned at tip. White back in flight.</p> <p>Marsh Sandpiper – Supercilium extends past eye. Clean white breast, lighter upperparts. White back in flight.</p> <p>Wood Sandpiper – Supercilium extends past eye. Wingtips not extending past tail.</p> <p>Green Sandpiper – Dusky/darker underwing. Broader bars on tail. Darker upperparts. Green legs.</p> <p>Common/Spotted Redshank – Larger and stockier, red colouration to legs and bill. White back in flight.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Menkhorst et al. (2017)</p>	

<b>Section F: References and aids</b>	
Did you use books, journal articles or on-line sites or pages to help you prepare this submission? Which ones?	<p>Facebook post 24/09/20 on Australian Bird Identification page</p> <p>Facebook post 24/09/20 on Australian Twitchers page</p> <p>Note due to technical issues the link for both these posts is attached in a separate file.</p> <p>Identification:</p> <p>Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J, Marsack, P. &amp; Franklin, K. (2017). <i>The Australian Bird Guide</i>. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.</p>
Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?	<p>In response to my initial post on the Facebook Australian Bird Identification page Kevin Bartram and Stephen Murray made suggestions that it wasn't Marsh Sandpiper and could potentially be respectively Stilt Sandpiper or Lesser Yellowlegs. After the second set of observations and photographs I was confident of the identification without requiring further assistance.</p>





