

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

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	George Vaughan
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Hudsonian Godwit (<i>Limosa haemastica</i>)
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Orielton Lagoon, Tasmania.
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	25 th of September 2018.
How many individuals were there?	One.
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	Using the time-honoured techniques for getting close enough to Godwit flocks for both parties, I managed to creep in to a very close range, perhaps fifteen-twenty metres.
Habitat description	The tidal shallows of Greenshank Bay, the main Godwit roost and feeding ground of Orielton Lagoon.
Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	It was a pretty overcast afternoon, which actually played in my favour since I prefer overcast light as a photographic medium...
How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	One hundred percent. The Hudsonian Godwit is far and away the most unique of the Godwits in form, colours and behaviour... and the photos put it entirely beyond doubt!
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	I did indeed find this bird; it seems very likely that this was the same bird that caused great excitement at the end of the previous Wader Season, but I've been advised by several birding friends that I should still submit it.
What experience have you had with this species?	I've had probably as much experience as any Australian birder can have with Hudsonians; I make it a point of honour to visit Orielton at least once a week, more than that when something takes my fancy... and considering the Hudsonian is one of my favourite bird species on earth since before I even saw it, I naturally spent a lot of time in the company of this bird! What's more, on the last day of 2016, I also twitched a Hudsonian that'd set up at the Little Waihi Estuary in New Zealand, where of course the Hudsonian is considerably more common than in

	these parts.
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	What seems almost certain to be the same bird was seen there, as I mentioned above, at the end of the 2017-2018 Wader Season; funnily enough, it was my brother who independently stumbled upon that one!
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	This was long before I had any involvement with such circles, so no. What's more, the ID was pretty clear cut, so I doubt much discussion would've been needed anyway.
Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)	Indeed I do, 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.













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	In plumage, the Hudsonian was, as ever, a very rich, warm shade of chocolate brown with the trademark “smudged” pattern along the flanks and back, as opposed to the Bar-Tails coarse streaks on a grey-tan background. Even with the naked eye, and from no small distance, this rich colouring distinguished it immediately. This bird even had thick, marbled veins of faded russet in the white of the belly, a remnant of its breeding best. The brow was limited to a thick white splotch between the bill and the eye. I also managed to see the brilliant white rump and sharp black tail when it flew, along with the smoky coloured armpit and underwing.
Bare parts	As always, the bare parts were what instantly separated the Hudsonian from the Black-Tailed Godwit that’d been kicking around Orielson for the last couple of seasons; the graceful proportions of the upward-curved bill to the head, and the graceful, proportionate legs gave it an almost “swan-like” aspect, as opposed to the remarkable gangliness and sharpness of the Black-Tail’s general form.
Moult details	This bird was clearly transitioning out of its breeding plumage, given the very noticeable marbling of faded russet veins through the belly and flanks.
Structure and ‘jizz’	As mentioned above, the Hudsonian is the prettiest of the Godwits by far, in structure; the satisfyingly plump chest, fine long neck, sturdy-yet-graceful legs and very proportionate bill

	lend the Hudsonian and almost “swan-like” aspect totally different from the Bar Tails front-heavy bulk and the Black-Tail’s all-round gangliness.
Calls	I didn’t really hear this bird; come to think of it, I don’t believe I’ve ever heard the Hudsonian over the Bar-Tails.
Behaviours	The Hudsonian was, as it always is, distinguishable by its very unique quirks of nature. It was always the bird ranging furthest from the main flock, sticking to the peripheries whenever I came to visit. Sometimes the Bar-Tails would follow its lead en masse, sometimes they’d leave it to its own devices. In the spirit of Godwits in general, it didn’t mind being approached in the least, so long as the approach was slow and respectful; it was perfectly content with very close observation, unless the general mood of the whole flock was nervous. What’s more, the way in which the Hudsonian fed was very notable; compared to the slow and steady straight-line marches of the feeding Bar-Tails, the Hudsonian would always roam erratically this way and that at great speed. Most curiously of all though, in a quirk it showed on every visit, the Hudsonian would spin on the spot when actually probing for food; in this regard, along with its wide roamings, it very, very strongly called to mind a Phalarope, and could immediately be distinguished on this point alone!
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	I’d say this was an adult bird, and due to its proportions I’d be inclined to think it was a male, which in Godwits are the smaller and finer sex, though I could be wrong on that. The Hudsonian Godwit is of course monotypic, so taxonomy doesn’t really enter into it.

Section E: Confusion species

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

Obviously, Bar-Tails can easily discounted within one second of looking at the bird; their pale, coarsely streaked backs, disproportionate bills and much larger size make them as different from a Hudsonian as can be. As for ruling out the Black-Tail, which I actually thought this bird might well be when I first spotted it feeding, the moment it lifted its head to show that graceful, dainty bill with the upward curve, combined with the very much shorter, more proportionate legs and plumper body, again the ID was very straight forward with the naked eye and much experience!

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?	Given my intense love of the Waders for the last eight years, it would make this submission far, far longer than it needs to be to add every single source in which I’ve read about Hudsonian Godwits!
Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?	I would like to thank Paul Brooks and Peter Kyne for bringing it to my attention that I should submit this great favourite of mine for its return to Orielton after the off-season!