

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Notes on an American Golden-Plover seen in Penfield, NY

On 5 September 2013 there were 19 American Golden-Plovers in a very large, bare, plowed field at Wilbert's Farm on Salt Road in Penfield, Monroe County, NY. These were all adults except for two immatures. The plovers remained there for the next three weeks, the flock building up to as many as 80 and composed of more immatures as time wore on. Also present at this time were many Killdeer and one Semipalmated Plover.

On 24 September, one of the authors (L. Dirx) was viewing the plovers and testing a new camera by taking random photos of the flock. Upon review, these photos revealed one immature plover that stood out due to its exceptional golden coloration, shown in Figures 1a and 1b (pp. 47-48). After the photo in Figure 1a was posted to the local listserv, Andy Guthrie pointed out the possibility that this might be a Pacific Golden-Plover.

Pacific Golden-Plover is extremely rare on the eastern coast of the US. New York State has one confirmed record of this species, a molting adult found on 1 September 2003 at Mecox Bay in eastern Suffolk County (McGuinness 2003). A molting adult was also recorded in New Jersey on 4 September 2001; this bird remained for two weeks (Boyle 2011).

Normally, immature American Golden-Plovers in first basic plumage (as shown in Figure 2, p. 48) have grayish coloration with little to no tonal variation, as opposed to Pacific Golden-Plovers which are very golden in color in both adults and immatures in basic plumage. However, Dunn et al. (1986) point out that both American Golden-Plovers and immature Black-bellied Plovers can have golden-colored mantles. Their work in field identification showed that the best characteristic separating Pacific from American Golden-Plovers is the number of exposed primary tips projecting past the folded tertials. American Golden-Plover has a longer primary projection with four or five exposed primary tips showing, whereas Pacific has a shorter primary projection with only three exposed tips. The other important field marks of Pacific Golden-Plover include longer legs, smaller bill, and smaller and slimmer body.

In Figure 1b (p. 48), the four exposed primaries confirm that this is indeed an American Golden-Plover. Because this plumage is rare in this species, any plover in this plumage in the East should be carefully checked to rule out Pacific Golden-Plover.

Laurie Dirx and Dominic Sherony, Rochester, NY

Boyle, W. J., 2011. *The Birds of New Jersey*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. p. 85.

Dunn, J. L. Morlan, J. & Wilds, C. P. (1986) Field identification of forms of Lesser Golden-Plover *International Bird Identification* November 1986.

McGuinness, H. 2003. New York's First Record of Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*). *Kingbird* 53(4): 307-312.

Figures from “Notes on an American Golden-Plover seen in Penfield, NY” p. 14.



Figure 1a American Golden-Plover, Penfield, *Monroe*, 24 Sep 2013, © Dominic Sherony.



Figure 1b. American Golden-Plover, Penfield, *Monroe*, 24 Sep 2013, showing the dorsal view and exposed primaries. Photo © Dominic Sherony.



Figure 2 First-cycle American Golden-Plover, Rochester, *Monroe*, 5 Oct 2005, © Dominic Sherony.