

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

The Dunlin is a familiar shorebird around the world, where its bright reddish back and black belly, and long, drooping bill distinguish it from nearly all other shorebirds. It breeds across the top of both North America and Eurasia, and winters along coasts around the northern hemisphere.

Keys to Identification

Adult Description

Medium-sized sandpiper. Moderately short neck. Moderately long, drooping bill. Moderately long, blackish legs. Slightly hunched appearance. In breeding plumage has black belly, rufous cap, and rufous back. Nonbreeding plumage is all dull brownish gray, with whitish belly.

Immature Description

Juvenile has reddish back with more scaly edges to back feathers, and brownish black splotches on belly.

Cool Facts

- Dunlin breeding in northern Alaska apparently move west, migrating down the eastern side of Siberia and Asia to Japan and China.
- The oldest recorded Dunlin was at least 12 years, 5 months old when it was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in California.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 6.3 - 8.7 inches
- Wingspan - 14.2 - 15 inches
- Weight - 1.7 - 2.3 ounces

