

DOWITCHER COMPARISON CHEAT SHEET Cin-Ty Lee &

Item	Long-billed	Short-billed Andrew Birch
Voice	“keek” higher, several times	“tututu” low staccato series
Eyes	lower in head	higher in head
Forehead slope	shallower	steeper
Bill length	overlaps, averages longer	averages shorter
Bill lth/head ratio*	1.9 median	1.6 median
Bill curve	straighter full length	droops outer 1/3 ^d
Loral angle	smaller	larger
Supercilium	straighter	more arched
Supercilium	narrower in front	wider in front
Superciliums meet	straight-edged ‘V’	tapered-edged ‘V’
Leg (both tarsi)	longer	shorter
Body position	more hunched	less hunched
Lower back	slight indentation	less indentation
Tail	longer, slightly cocked	shorter, less cocked
Tail bars	black wider than white	white equal or wider
Wing length	slightly shorter	slightly longer
Juvenal tertials	gray; narrower buff edges	gray; buff-orange edges
“ “	& duller internal marks	& internal marks
“ gtr. coverts	uniform gray	strongly patterned
“ crown	grayer, less contrast to back	dk brown, fine black streaks
Worn Alt. plumage	darker due to smaller width	lighter
of late summer	of internal feather markings	
“ “	black flank bars worn away	some side spotting retained
“ “	underside wash more red	wash more orange
Basic flanks	gray vertical bars gives	paler gray splotches, can be
“ “	greater contr. to white belly	arranged in vert. bars
“ chest	uniform dark wash	small dark spots/streaks
“ “	grades gradually into chin	sharper contrast to paler chin
“ pale chin	limited, can’t see if asleep	larger, visible when asleep
Winter habitat	prefer less saline or fresh water	prefer more saline areas

Cin-Ty Lee & Andrew Birch Surfbirds.com, 2005 & Birding Magazine, 2006

<http://www.surfbirds.com/ID%20Articles/dowitchers1005/dowitchers.html>

Loral angle: In profile, angle between an imaginary extension of the gape of the bill towards back of the head and the line connecting the gape of the bill with the center of the bird’s iris

Abbreviations: alt – alternate; contr – contrast; dk – dark; gtr – greater; lth – length; vert – vertical

* **Bill length to head ratio:** amount bill length exceeds profile width of head; from Pekka Sarvela, 2005 http://www.surfbirds.com/ID%20Articles/dowitchers1005/Dowitcher_bill_surfbirds.pdf

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Summary and format by Chuck Almdale, Aug’14