

Bachman's Sparrow

2 Jun 1884

east of Des Moines, Polk Co., IA

J. B. Green

DuMont 1931, 1934; Keyes and Williams 1889, Anderson 1907

Record Number: 81-IJ

Classification: NA

REFERENCES

Keyes and Williams 1889, p 144.

Anderson 1907

DuMont 1931, 1933

VOTE (1981): 2-III, 2-V, 3-VI

VI, bird not described.

VI, Nest site would be extremely atypical for this species, which (at present) is open pine woods, though it occurs also in similar dry habitats with scattered trees and patches of dense but not tall underbrush, such as abandoned orchards. Anderson refers to it as the 'oak-woods' sparrow, suggesting that in presettlement times it may have nested in oak savannah at the edges of the prairie. Allen (in Williams, 1889) also states that except for nest location he would have said that the eggs were those of the indigo bunting. My guess is that an atypically-placed nest of this species is more probable than a nest of the Bachman's sparrow.

VI, based on eggs only.

III, A bird seen 2X, flushed from nest in clover field. Eggs collected and identified as *A. aestivalis* by Prof J. A. Allen. Disposition of eggs unknown. Since all we know is what was seen and reported, this record can be no better than a III.

III, Bent mentions no ground nests of Indigo Bunting, and Mr. Green observed that the bird, which he considered to be a Bachman's Sparrow, along with the fact that it nested on the ground and has white eggs. Possibly II - eggs sent to Allen, who considered them to be this species on geographic grounds, and that Indigo Bunting does not nest on the ground.

Bachman's Sparrow

Keyes and Williams 1889
p 144

[B 370, part, R 226a, C 252 U, 575 a.]

Peucaea aestivalis bachmanii (Aud.). Bachman's Sparrow. This species is entered here upon the following data: On the 2d of June, 1884, Mr. J. B. Green, of Des Moines, while collecting, several miles east of the city, passed through several fields in search of the eggs of the yellow-winged sparrow, and other ground-nesting species which were known to breed there. Mr. Green says: "I had passed through a corn-field and had just entered a field of clover, when I started from nearly under my feet, a sparrow somewhat larger than a yellow-winged, but not having my gun with me, I was unable to secure it. After a brief search I discovered a nest containing five white eggs, which being without markings, I knew did not belong to a *Coturniculus*; but not wishing to take the eggs without, at least, a good look at the bird, I continued hunting for other nests, while awaiting its return to the nest. After a time I returned, with more caution than before, and again flushed the bird, but this time I succeeded in noting more carefully its appearance, which, on arriving home, and taking into consideration the eggs, corresponded with *Peucaea aestivalis bachmanii*. The nest was placed in a slight depression at the base of a tuft of clover, and was composed of dry grasses, lined with finer materials and a few hairs."

Two of the eggs were sent to Professor J. A. Allen for further identification. Mr. Allen replied:

"I have compared the eggs with those of *Peucaea aestivalis*, *P. cassini*, and *P. carpalis*, and with those other species laying white, or whitish eggs. Taking into account the situation of the nest—on the ground—and the geographical distribution of the other species of *Peucaea*, and the few other species of finch which lay white eggs, I should say that your conclusions that these eggs are those of *P. aestivalis bachmanii* is highly probable—in fact, almost beyond question. I find, however, that the eggs sent are absolutely indistinguishable from those of *P. carpalis*, to which, of course, for geographical reasons, they cannot belong; and they are also indistinguishable from eggs of *Poospiza (Amphispiza) belli*, which is a species likewise out of the question, for geographical reasons. The eggs of *P. aestivalis* are a little larger, and a purer, glossy white, as are also those of *P. cassini*, differing from the eggs of both of these species quite markedly in both of these particulars. Your eggs have a slight bluish cast, and in this respect, and in size, also similar to the eggs of *Cyanospiza cyanea*. Had not the nest been placed on the ground, I should have said that they were eggs of this species. If *P. aestivalis bachmanii* occurs with you, it would seem that they *must* be the eggs of that bird. And the only question I can see about them is whether they may not be those of *Cyanospiza cyanea*; but the position of the nest seems to render this improbable."

Osborn 1892
p 8

Peucaea aestivalis bachmannii (Aud.).

Bachman's Sparrow

Anderson 1907
405-406

25. (575a). *Peucaea aestivalis bachmanii* (Audubon). Bachman Sparrow.

The Bachman Sparrow or Oak-woods Sparrow is a species of Southern distribution, and although there are no absolutely authentic Iowa records at hand, it is probable that the species occasionally straggles northward into the state. According to Professor Lynds Jones (Birds of Ohio, 1903, p. 150), it has appeared in Ohio since 1890, apparently from the southwest.

Keyes and Williams (Birds of Iowa, 1889, p. 144) enter the species in their list upon the strength of a set of five eggs taken near Des Moines, June 2, 1884, from a nest on the ground in a clover field. The bird was seen twice, but was not secured. Concerning this Professor J. A. Allen states (*Ibid*): "I have compared the eggs with those of *P. aestivalis*, *P. cassini*, and *P. carpalis*, and with those of other species laying white or whitish eggs. Taking into consideration the situation of the nest—on the ground—and the geographical distribution of the other species of *Peucaea* and the few other species of Finch which lay white eggs, I should say that your conclusions that these eggs are those of *P. aestivalis bachmanii* is highly probable—in fact, almost beyond question."

Robert Ridgway (Birds of North and Middle Amer., i, p. 256) gives the distribution of the species [*Aimophila aestivalis bachmanii* (Audubon)] as "north to southern Virginia, Maryland, southern Indiana, southern Illinois (north, locally, at least to parallel of 40°), and southeastern Iowa, citing Keyes and Williams' Des Moines record (*supra*) as "Doubtful."

DuMont 1933
p2158

Aimophila aestivalis bachmani (Audubon). Bachman's Sparrow
Keyes and Williams (1889) listed this species upon the record of a set of eggs taken near Des Moines, Polk County, June 2, 1884. The bird was seen twice but was not secured. Anderson (1907) placed this species in his hypothetical list.

DuMont, P. A. 1931. Birds of Polk County Iowa. Des Moines, Des Moines Audubon Society pp 1-72 (p 67)

[BACHMAN'S SPARROW, *Aimophila aestivalis bachmani* (Audubon).]

Anderson, 1907, p. 405, places the following record in the Hypothetical List: Keyes and Williams (Birds of Iowa, 1889, p. 144) enter the species in their list upon the strength of a set of five eggs taken near Des Moines, June 2, 1884, from a nest on the ground in a clover field. The bird was seen twice, but was not secured.

The range of this species as given in the A. O. U. Check-List, Fourth Edition, 1931: Breeds in the Upper and Lower Austral Zones in central Illinois, (locally to southern Iowa) . . .

The author follows Anderson in reporting this species on a hypothetical basis until a specimen is secured.]