

Lark Sparrow  
4 Jan 1997  
s. of Riverton, Fremont Co., IA  
\*Jacqueline M. Harms  
IBL 67:62, 68:87

Record Number: 97-05  
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Jacqueline M. Harms, 805 S. Elm, Shenandoah 51601 [6/15/97]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:62  
Records Committee: IBL 68:87

VOTE: 1 A-D, 6 NA

NA, The bird was seen briefly from the back. The "black and white striped face" and white outer tail feathers are suggestive but not conclusive for this species.

NA, Bird seen only from back, except turned head. Superficial description of head pattern does not eliminate Black-throated Sparrow, which has varying amount of white on outer rectrices.

NA, There are certainly suggestions of Lark Sparrow here, but I think we need more detail for a winter record. Even a quick sketch would have helped. I have a hard time evaluating the description of the facial pattern. Did anyone see the underparts?

NA, Tail and face pattern (undescribed) could also fit Black-throated Sparrow and most longspurs. May have been Lark Sparrow, but require more detail.

NA, Lark Sparrow has rounded tail with white outer tips. That doesn't sound like white side feathers with black center to me. Lark Sparrow does not change appearance in winter, so head should show chestnut as well as black and white. Apparently underparts not seen. I can't identify this bird from what is given.

NA, The description of the color of the face pattern should show some brown, this was not noted by either observer. The tail pattern appears to be good for this species but the color of the face pattern makes this record suspect. We should discuss this as a committee. I would like to see what other committee members have to say on this species.

A-D, I was at count compilation. Especially in light of Thelen observation near Newell, I am willing to accept this report. Observers aware of Vesper Sparrow. Description eliminates towhees (Eastern and Spotted).

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

97-05

What species? Lark Sparrow How many? 1

Location? 1 mile south of Riverton, IA

Type of Habitat? deciduous <sup>edge</sup> woods adjacent to corn field

When? date(s): 1-4-97 time: 2:00 to 2:30 pm

Who? your name and address: Jacqueline M. Harms - 805 S. Elm - Sherandoah, IA

Others with you: Jarrett Harms, Joe + Maria Worthington, Larry Falk,

Others before or after you: Derry Wolfords none

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

observer #1 House sparrow size bird seen through binoculars from the back -- noticeable tail = white side feathers, black center (longer than side feathers) -- as turned head noticeable face pattern = dark + light "striped"; seen 10-15 seconds then flew -- disappeared behind large brush pile -- returned to area 1/2 hour later to show rest of group - - - - -

OBSERVER #2 HOUSE SPARROW SIZED BIRD OR MAYBE A TOUCH SMALLER. STRONG BLACK+WHITE STRIPED FACE PATTERN TAIL HAD WHITE FEATHERS ON ~~INSIDE~~ EACH SIDE TAIL DARK TO BLACK. BIRD WAS IN HEAVY COVER AND OBSERVED THROUGH BINOCULARS REST OF BIRD APPEARED DARK

Similar species; how eliminated: Vesper Sparrow - no face pattern  
Juncos - wrong color  
AMCO. tree Sparrow - no white outer tail feathers

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NO  
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. - observer #1: cloudy, windy, estimated 12-15' distance, binoculars OBSERVER #2 PARTLY CLOUDY, WINDY BUT BIRD AND VIEWING WAS OUT OF WIND ESTIMATED DISTANCE 30-35' OBSERVED THROUGH 7X35 BINOCULARS

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE SPECIFIC  
OTHER THAN BIRD FEEDER OBSERVATIONS OF OTHER SPECIES

References and persons consulted before writing description: Larry Falk - Nebraska City, NE in our group; Peterson's Field Guide to birds east of Rockies

How long before field notes made? 3 hrs. this form completed? 3 hrs.  
5 minutes

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).