

Chestnut-collared Longspur  
12 Apr 1995  
NW, Sioux Co., IA

Record Number: 95-21  
Classification: A-P

\*Kent  
P-0447, IBL 65:77, 66:97; Kent 1996

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

PHOTOGRAPH

T. H. Kent, P-0447 (Field Notes 49:260)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:77; Field Notes 49:260 (P-0447)

Records Committee: IBL 66:97

Kent, T. H. 1996. Chestnut-collared Longspurs in Sioux and  
Lyon counties. IBL 66:61-63.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Great documentation on a super bird.

**Grosbeaks to Finches**

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were well represented among the migrating passerines; notable among numerous good counts were 14 at a *Calloway*, KY feeding station Apr. 30 (WB). The northward Blue Grosbeak expansion took a major step when three birds appeared at feeders near South Bend, IN during the interval May 9-13 (†VI, †TSt, *fide* VR). A ♂ Lazuli Bunting, discovered in a rural yard near Spencer, IA May 28-29 (R&EH, †LS, †HW *et al.*), showed no evidence of hybridization. Among the temporal extremes were an early ♂ Dickcissel at Spfld., Apr. 6 (DBo) and very late Am. Tree Sparrow in Jax.P., May 11 (KC). It was a good spring for Clay-colored Sparrows. Five were found in the Chicago area May 10 (LB) and two were seen along the Indiana lake-front the same day (JMc, JCd). In addition, a remarkable four singleton Clay-colored were documented in Ohio, where they are casual: May 9 in Parma (†RHa), May 13 at Metzger Marsh (JBr, †LY), May 21 N. Perry (†JP), and May 21 at H.B.S.P. (†RHn). LeConte's Sparrows were also plentiful; this species peaked Mar. 18 when ten were counted in *Johnson*, IL (JDe). In Iowa a record-late LeConte's, seen May 23 in *Kosuth* (JF, TK), raised the possibility of nesting. The Region's only Sharp-tailed Sparrows were seen in Iowa, where singletons were detected May 20 in *Woodbury* (BH *et al.*) and May 21 & 24 at Tomahawk Marsh (TK *et al.*). Also in Iowa, a very late Lincoln's Sparrow was found near Spencer May 30 (TK). A White-crowned Sparrow of the rarely reported *gambelli* race was seen in Beaver creek, OH Apr. 25-26 (JDu, ST). More Harris' Sparrows than usual ranged e. of the Mississippi R., with six in Illinois and one in Indiana. Smith's Longspurs were reported in above-normal numbers; peak counts included 60 in *De Witt*, IL Apr. 15 (MD) and 50 in *Louisa*, IA Apr. 6-7 (PP *et al.*). In extreme n.w. Iowa, single Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found in *Sioux* and *Lyon* Apr. 12, by driving paved roads after a snow storm (†TK ph.).

A W. Meadowlark wandered e. to *Tuscarawas*, OH where it was seen Mar. 25-May 13 (ES). The only extralimital Yellow-headed Blackbird was in *Delaware*, OH Mar. 19 (RHa). According to Kent, Great-tailed Grackles are well established in Iowa, and expanding eastward. A similar pattern emerged in Missouri, where two ♂ Great-tailed wandered E to Columbia May 13 (†PMc *et al.*). A very early Orchard Oriole arrived in Urbana, IL Apr. 16 (RCh *et al.*). Winter finches were acutely scarce across the Region. The only Pine Grosbeaks consisted of two wintering birds that lingered at Spencer, IA until Mar. 8 (†JF, †TK, LS, ph.).

Even Purple Finch were hard to find, with only a handful reported from most states. The season's only crossbills consisted of three Reds at the Morton Arboretum, Chicago Apr. 29 (CA). Single Com. Redpolls were reported from Ogden Dunes, IN Apr. 24 (JW) and North Royalton, OH May 7 (JT). The Region's maximum Pine Siskin count of only five clearly attested to a dearth of winter finches. Eurasian Tree Sparrows continued their march up the Mississippi R. valley, with reports of 25 in *Mercer*, IL and two in *Louisa*, IA (PP).

**Uncorroborated Report**

The following sighting was not accompanied by documentation, was reportedly photographed, and may well be valid: ad. Curlew Sandpiper May 4 at Medusa Marsh, OH.

**Contributors cited** (Subregional editors in boldface): Cindy Alberico, Kirk Alexander, Pam Allen, Reid Allen, Michael Baum, Jane Bell (JBe), Pat Bell, Laurence Binford, David Bohlen (DBo), Gary Bowman (GBo), Wally Brines, Gordon Brown (Gbr), Jenny Brumfield (JBr), Ken Brock, Alan Branhagen (ABh), Alan Bruner (AB) (Indiana), Bill Buskirk, Fred Busroe (Kentucky), John Cassady (JcD), Karen Cassel, John Castrale (JCs), Robert Cecil (RCe), Robert Chapel (RCh) (Illinois), Jane Clark (JCl), Paul Clyne, Myrna Deaton, Judy De-Neal (JDe), Fred Dinkelbach, Stephen Dinsmore, Terese Dudek, Jon Dunn (JDu), David Easterla, Chris Edwards, Bery Engebretsen, Peter Erzen, Vic Fazio, Todd Fink,

Ronald Flegal, James Fuller, Frank Greenland, Brad Grover, Ray Hannikman (RHn), Rob Harlan (RHa), Jim Haw (Haw), Russ & Ellen Heine (R&EH), Eury & Barbara Henderson (E&BH), Jim Hengeveld, (JHv), Dennis Henrickson, Craig Holt, Ed Hopkins, Robert Hughes (RHu), Bill Huser, Virgil Inman, Tom Jackman, Dan Kassebaum, Matthew Kenne, Thomas Kent (Iowa), Jason Klapon, Greg Lamberth, Midge Lechner, Tom LePage, Barbara Lund, Walter Marcisz, Charlott Mathena, Paul McKenzie (PMc), Jeff McCoy (JMc), Keith McMullen (KMc), Kevin Metcalf (KMe), Joe Milosevich (JM), Burt Monroe III, Paul Motts (PMo), Curt Nelson, M. Olson, Doug Overacker, Babs & Loren Padelford (B&LP), Maretta Petersen (MPe), Peter Petersen, Clell Peterson (CPe), Ed Pierce, Cynthia Plank (CPl), John Pogacnik, Roger & Dottie Powe (R&DP), Mark Proescholdt (MPr), Art & Tina Rickets (A&TR), Vic Riemenschneider, Larry Rosche (LRO) (Ohio), Richard Sandburg (RSa), Ed Schlabach, Tom Schantz (TSc), Lee Schoenewe, Tom Sherwood (TSh), Ross Silcock (RSi), Jim Sinclair (JSi), Brian Smith, Muriel Smith, Tom Stankus (TSt), Dale Stone, Sue Tackert, Ed Thelen, Marty Thelen, Rob Thelen, Judy Tisdale, Gil Waldbauer, Harold White, John White, Don Whitehead, Leroy Yoder, Albion Young, and Hank Zaletel. Many other individuals who could not be acknowledged also submitted notes to the various state reports.

—Kenneth J. Brock, Dept. of Geosciences, Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408.



**Male Chestnut-collared Longspur in Sioux County, Iowa, April 12, 1995.**  
Photograph/Thomas H. Kent.

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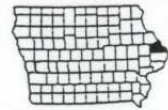
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Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653

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After this period, the behavior was modified: instead of shaking a single stalk, the bird would shake one or more stalks before gleaning the snow surface. Some of these stalks were known to have been previously shaken. A bird was also observed sticking its bill inside the seed capsule but abandoned the technique and returned to the snow surface. This period of stalk shaking continued about 15 minutes, after which the birds left the area.

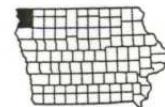
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1922B N. Center Street Road, Marshalltown, IA 50158

## CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS IN SIOUX AND LYON COUNTIES

THOMAS H. KENT

On 12 April 1995 at 10:15 a.m. in extreme northwestern Sioux County, I found the first of two male Chestnut-collared Longspurs. I found the other two miles north of Larchwood in Lyon County at 1:11 p.m. I came to northwestern Iowa to look for this species because there was fresh snow (most in Sioux and Lyon counties) and because the date was right for this species.



I was encouraged when I found a flock of 1,000 Lapland Longspurs in southwestern Sioux County. As I moved farther north, the ground became

completely snow covered except on the paved or black-topped roads, where birds of many species were flocking on the melted surface. I had been driving roads slowly since 6:50 a.m., when a Horned Lark and another bird that looked dark underneath flushed from the roadside and flew behind the car. I almost went on, but decided to check out the darker bird.

The bird was about the size of Lapland Longspurs, which were present at one point early in the observation period, and slightly larger and longer than several Vesper Sparrows that were with it. The belly was black up to the throat, but the flanks and under rump were white. The throat/chin were light yellow. There was a well-demarcated chestnut collar with a white line up to the collar. The crown was dark (black-brown) with a prominent white superciliary line. There was a black line from behind the eye to the nape and a less distinct white line below the eye. The area in front of the eye was light. The bill was medium dark and conical, about half as wide at the base as it was long. The scapulars and wing coverts were streaked due to tan feather edges on a brown background. The tail was squared with white triangular edges that were wide at the base and narrow at the tip. The center of the tail was a black V, wider at the tip. The legs appeared charcoal black. The bird fed in the grass within one foot of the road and faced into the wind. I took a number of photos with a 420 mm lens.

The second bird, also a male in breeding plumage, was feeding along the road with a flock of Lapland Longspurs less than a mile south of the Minnesota border. My description was similar to the Sioux County bird, except that I did not see the tail in flight. After a car flushed the birds, I could not relocate the Chestnut-collared Longspur.

The conditions this day were extraordinary, with all of the migrating birds flocking to the small amount of open area along paved roads. My estimates for some of the migrants in Sioux and Lyon counties between 6:50 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. were as follows: Killdeer (1,000 with 341 counted with a hand counter after 12:13 p.m.), Common Snipe (70 with 35 in one ditch), Northern Flicker (25), Horned Lark (200+), American Robin (3,000), American Tree Sparrow (2,000), Vesper Sparrow (100), Dark-eyed Junco (200+), Lapland Longspur (2,000), Red-winged Blackbird (not estimated), Western Meadowlark (100), Rusty Blackbird (100), and Brown-headed Cowbird (50).

Western Iowa is on the eastern fringe of the migration route for Chestnut-collared Longspur. Although there are a number of historical reports of this species in Iowa (Dinsmore et al. 1984), none are sufficiently documented to provide a first state record. The first acceptable record was documented by James Huntington in northwestern Muscatine County on 27 March 1982 (*IBL* 52:63, 53:35). Subsequent records have been from Johnson County on 12 March 1983 (*IBL* 53:55, 54:39), Story County on 20 March 1985 (*IBL* 55:70, 56:44), Woodbury County on 15 April 1986 (Bierman 1986), and Fremont County on 23 April 1992 (*IBL* 62:81, 63:70, *American Birds* 46:432 [photo]). The last two sightings included road-killed specimens (Iowa State University #2509, #2568). The birds in Muscatine and Johnson counties were in eastern Iowa, single, and associated with Smith's Longspurs. The birds in Woodbury and Fremont counties were in western Iowa, multiple, and associated with recent snow storms.

I was unsuccessful in locating the birds seen in Muscatine and Johnson counties in 1982 and 1983, and in 1992, when a narrow band of snow hit western Iowa, I knew it was Chestnut-collared Longspur time, but failed to act on my convictions. This year, it took no more than a small area of snow in northwestern Iowa to mobilize me

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to look for the rare longspur, and I was rewarded for my effort. Although this species may occur anywhere in the state, it is undoubtedly more likely in the west. Snow storms in April not only concentrate birds along the roads, but may also push migrants farther east than usual. Chestnut-collared Longspur is a rare vagrant to eastern United States and Canada.

#### LITERATURE CITED

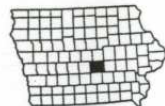
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#### REDDISH EGRET IN JASPER COUNTY

TIM SCHANTZ

September 5th, 1993 was a drizzly overcast day. In the late afternoon I checked the flooded fields west of Colfax along the Skunk River in Jasper County. During the past week, numerous shorebirds and waders had been seen in this area. In a small flooded area near the side of the road, I saw a small heron crouched at the edge in some sparse vegetation. As I took pictures of it from the car, it walked to the middle of the pool and started to flail around wildly, flapping its wings and shuffling its feet as it darted its bill at unseen prey. I recognized the bird as an immature Reddish Egret. Ironically, Stephen Dinsmore and I had found a bird in the same plumage on Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, just ten days before.



I noted a wader much smaller than a Great Blue Heron, with plum-colored wash to a generally gray plumage. There were cinnamon tones on the head and neck, and the underwing linings were also cinnamon colored. The eyes were pale yellow, and the bill two toned in color. Its legs appeared proportionally long for the size of its body.

After photographing the bird and noting all the details, I alerted other birders. In the fading light we were unable to find the bird that evening. The next morning I relocated the bird about a half mile to the east. The bird was last seen on 10 September 1995 and was observed by many. This is the first report of this species for Iowa.

The Reddish Egret breeds locally on both coasts of Mexico, in the southeastern United States, and the Caribbean (Howell and Webb 1995). Reddish Egrets have been known to wander along the coast of the United States as far north as New England in the East and central California in the West (DeSante and Pyle 1986). These birds are almost always found on salt water lagoons. Inland records on fresh water are extremely rare anywhere in North America. All reports of this species in the Midwest were old and judged hypothetical until the unprecedented dispersal in 1993. In 1993, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan all had their first confirmed state record of this species! In contacting various state record committees, I discovered that Georgia had above normal reports, South Carolina had three, North Carolina had eight, and Delaware, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan all had one. While some

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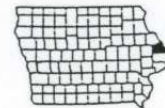
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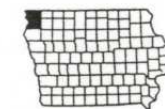
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I was encouraged when I found a flock of 1,000 Lapland Longspurs in southwestern Sioux County. As I moved farther north, the ground became

completely snow covered except on the paved or black-topped roads, where birds of many species were flocking on the melted surface. I had been driving roads slowly since 6:50 a.m., when a Horned Lark and another bird that looked dark underneath flushed from the roadside and flew behind the car. I almost went on, but decided to check out the darker bird.

The bird was about the size of Lapland Longspurs, which were present at one point early in the observation period, and slightly larger and longer than several Vesper Sparrows that were with it. The belly was black up to the throat, but the flanks and under rump were white. The throat/chin were light yellow. There was a well-demarcated chestnut collar with a white line up to the collar. The crown was dark (black-brown) with a prominent white superciliary line. There was a black line from behind the eye to the nape and a less distinct white line below the eye. The area in front of the eye was light. The bill was medium dark and conical, about half as wide at the base as it was long. The scapulars and wing coverts were streaked due to tan feather edges on a brown background. The tail was squared with white triangular edges that were wide at the base and narrow at the tip. The center of the tail was a black V, wider at the tip. The legs appeared charcoal black. The bird fed in the grass within one foot of the road and faced into the wind. I took a number of photos with a 420 mm lens.

The second bird, also a male in breeding plumage, was feeding along the road with a flock of Lapland Longspurs less than a mile south of the Minnesota border. My description was similar to the Sioux County bird, except that I did not see the tail in flight. After a car flushed the birds, I could not relocate the Chestnut-collared Longspur.

The conditions this day were extraordinary, with all of the migrating birds flocking to the small amount of open area along paved roads. My estimates for some of the migrants in Sioux and Lyon counties between 6:50 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. were as follows: Killdeer (1,000 with 341 counted with a hand counter after 12:13 p.m.), Common Snipe (70 with 35 in one ditch), Northern Flicker (25), Horned Lark (200+), American Robin (3,000), American Tree Sparrow (2,000), Vesper Sparrow (100), Dark-eyed Junco (200+), Lapland Longspur (2,000), Red-winged Blackbird (not estimated), Western Meadowlark (100), Rusty Blackbird (100), and Brown-headed Cowbird (50).

Western Iowa is on the eastern fringe of the migration route for Chestnut-collared Longspur. Although there are a number of historical reports of this species in Iowa (Dinsmore et al. 1984), none are sufficiently documented to provide a first state record. The first acceptable record was documented by James Huntington in northwestern Muscatine County on 27 March 1982 (*IBL* 52:63, 53:35). Subsequent records have been from Johnson County on 12 March 1983 (*IBL* 53:55, 54:39), Story County on 20 March 1985 (*IBL* 55:70, 56:44), Woodbury County on 15 April 1986 (Bierman 1986), and Fremont County on 23 April 1992 (*IBL* 62:81, 63:70, *American Birds* 46:432 [photo]). The last two sightings included road-killed specimens (Iowa State University #2509, #2568). The birds in Muscatine and Johnson counties were in eastern Iowa, single, and associated with Smith's Longspurs. The birds in Woodbury and Fremont counties were in western Iowa, multiple, and associated with recent snow storms.

I was unsuccessful in locating the birds seen in Muscatine and Johnson counties in 1982 and 1983, and in 1992, when a narrow band of snow hit western Iowa, I knew it was Chestnut-collared Longspur time, but failed to act on my convictions. This year, it took no more than a small area of snow in northwestern Iowa to mobilize me

to look for the rare longspur, and I was rewarded for my effort. Although this species may occur anywhere in the state, it is undoubtedly more likely in the west. Snow storms in April not only concentrate birds along the roads, but may also push migrants farther east than usual. Chestnut-collared Longspur is a rare vagrant to eastern United States and Canada.

#### LITERATURE CITED

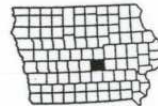
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### REDDISH EGRET IN JASPER COUNTY

TIM SCHANTZ

September 5th, 1993 was a drizzly overcast day. In the late afternoon I checked the flooded fields west of Colfax along the Skunk River in Jasper County. During the past week, numerous shorebirds and waders had been seen in this area. In a small flooded area near the side of the road, I saw a small heron crouched at the edge in some sparse vegetation. As I took pictures of it from the car, it walked to the middle of the pool and started to flail around wildly, flapping its wings and shuffling its feet as it darted its bill at unseen prey. I recognized the bird as an immature Reddish Egret. Ironically, Stephen Dinsmore and I had found a bird in the same plumage on Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, just ten days before.



I noted a wader much smaller than a Great Blue Heron, with plum-colored wash to a generally gray plumage. There were cinnamon tones on the head and neck, and the underwing linings were also cinnamon colored. The eyes were pale yellow, and the bill two toned in color. Its legs appeared proportionally long for the size of its body.

After photographing the bird and noting all the details, I alerted other birders. In the fading light we were unable to find the bird that evening. The next morning I relocated the bird about a half mile to the east. The bird was last seen on 10 September 1995 and was observed by many. This is the first report of this species for Iowa.

The Reddish Egret breeds locally on both coasts of Mexico, in the southeastern United States, and the Caribbean (Howell and Webb 1995). Reddish Egrets have been known to wander along the coast of the United States as far north as New England in the East and central California in the West (DeSante and Pyle 1986). These birds are almost always found on salt water lagoons. Inland records on fresh water are extremely rare anywhere in North America. All reports of this species in the Midwest were old and judged hypothetical until the unprecedented dispersal in 1993. In 1993, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan all had their first confirmed state record of this species! In contacting various state record committees, I discovered that Georgia had above normal reports, South Carolina had three, North Carolina had eight, and Delaware, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan all had one. While some



95-21

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

**Species:** Chestnut-collared Longspur; **Number:** 1

**Location:** A545 at 290th St., NW Sioux Co., Iowa

**Date:** 12 April 1995; **Time:** 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.

**Name and address:** Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

**Others before/with/after:** none

**Habitat and circumstances:** farmland

**Description of bird:** I came to NW Iowa to look for this species because there was fresh snow (most in Sioux and Lyon counties) and because the date was right for this species. I had been driving roads slowly since 6:50 a.m. A Horned Lark and another bird that looked dark underneath flushed from the roadside and flew behind the car. I almost went on, but decided to turn around and check out the darker bird. Through the windshield I could see its dark belly. I turned the car so that I could get a window-mounted scope on the bird. Later, I drove past the bird and came back on the opposite side of the road. The car was half on the shoulder and the bird was on the grassy edge on the opposite side of the road or just ahead of me. It flushed several times when another car came by, but returned to the same location with several Vesper Sparrows. The bird was about the size of Lapland Longspurs, which were present at one point early in the observation period, and slightly larger and longer than Vesper Sparrows. The belly was black up to the throat, but the flanks and under rump were white. The throat/chin were light yellow. There was a well-demarcated chestnut collar with a white line up to the collar. The crown was dark (black-brown) with a prominent white superciliary line. There was a black line from behind the eye to the nape and a less distinct white line below the eye. The area in front of the eye was light. The bill was medium dark and conical, about half as wide at the base as it was long. The scapulars and wings were streaked due to tan feather edges on a brown background. The tail was squared with white triangular edges that were wide at the base and narrow at the tip. The center of the tail was a black V, wider at the tip. The legs appeared charcoal black. The bird fed in the grass within one foot of the road and faced into the wind. I took a number of photos with a 420 mm lens.

**Voice:** Not heard. I played a tape of the bird's song, but observed no response.

**Similar species:** The behavior was typical for a longspur and the field marks are distinctive.

**Any one have reservations?:** NA

**Light:** cloudy; **Distance:** 25 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular, 20x scope, 420 mm lens

**Previous experience:** Have seen in Colorado and North Dakota.

**References before/after viewing:** Looked at NG Guide the day before.

**Time of notes:** while viewing; **Final typing:** written out 7 hours; typed 5 days.