

Lazuli Bunting

1 Jun 1996

Little Sioux Wildlife Area, Clay Co., IA

\*Lee A. Schoenewe, \*Jim Fuller

also 2 June; IBL 66:136; 67:82, Schoenewe 1998

Record Number: 96-35

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Lee A. Schoenewe (1 June), 518 W. 4th St., Spencer 51301

[4/6/97]

Jim Fuller (2 June), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:136

Records Committee: IBL 67:82

Schoenewe, L. A. 1998. Lazuli Buntings two consecutive years in Clay County. IBL 68:67-68.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Summer range reaches NE Nebraska and SE S. Dakota making this a possible summer resident, but most likely a late migrant.

A-D, Description of plumage, and especially song compared to Indigo Bunting, is convincing. No evidence of hybridization.

96-35

silhouette was distinctive. The skinny, almost pencil-thin neck was held straight in front of the bird, and lacked an obvious head. The tail was noticeably longer than the length of the neck and was fanned as the bird soared. The leading edges of the wings were straight and held perpendicular to the body. The only size comparison was with Broad-winged Hawks. This bird was clearly much larger, roughly twice the length of a Broad-winged Hawk. This bird's wingspan was also at least 50% greater. The identification was based largely on this flight silhouette. I concluded that the bird was a female or immature because of the paler neck and upper breast. This represents the second record of an Anhinga in Iowa. The other record was of a female or immature from 18-31 October 1953 near Riverton in Fremont County (Mrs. W. H. Collins, *Iowa Bird Life* 23:72, 1953).

612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

### LAZULI BUNTING IN MILLS COUNTY

THOMAS H. KENT

A male Lazuli Bunting first appeared the feeder of Anna Leich in the Loess Hills of rural Mills County north of Glenwood about 6 p.m. on 23 May 1997. She noticed an unusual bird feeding on the seed that was spread on patio and, with the help of a field guide, identified it. I saw and photographed the bird on 27 May, and Reid Allen photographed it on 26 May.



Over the next week the bunting came to feed regularly and was seen by many visitors. It preferred to feed on the patio rather than at one of the several feeders that were regularly attended by other species. It usually dropped down to the ground from the trees in the back yard and returned at regular intervals during the day. It was easily frightened by movement or camera noise, but this was easily prevented by viewing from inside the house. It was present all day on 29 May but was not seen after that.

The Lazuli Bunting was slightly larger than American Goldfinches and slightly smaller than House Finches that were also present at the ground feeding area. It had a compact body and conical bill. It had a blue hood with sharp demarcation on the upper breast and less sharp demarcation on the nape. There was black around the eye and in the loreal area. The upper mandible was mostly dark and the lower mandible flesh-colored. On the front and below the blue, there was a band of cinnamon that curved from the sides to the center of the breast. It faded to white on the lower breast. The belly and under tail were white. The back, wings, and tail were nondescript brown-black with some blue shading, and the rump was blue. There was a prominent white upper wing bar and thinner brownish lower wing bar. The back was streaked. The legs were dark.



Lazuli Bunting, Mills Co.,  
26 May 1997, Reid Allen.

The location in the Loess Hill north of Glenwood has mixed open and wooded habitat with conifers present in the neighbor's yard to the north. Many species of

birds frequent the Leich's feeders. At this time there were about six Red Crossbills and several Pine Siskins. Mrs. Leich picked up and released a recently fledged Pine Siskin on 25 May.

Prior to 1997 there were eight confirmed records of Lazuli Bunting for Iowa with seven from northwestern and one from southwestern Iowa and all from spring/early summer. This species has been found each year since 1994 and there are three other records from 1997. Also, four of the recent records have been at feeders. Does this represent an increased vagrancy of this species or just an increased awareness on the part of observers in western Iowa?

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

### CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS IN FREMONT COUNTY

BABS AND LOREN PADELFORD

On 12 April 1997, after a heavy snowfall on 11 April, we were in southern Fremont County looking for Chestnut-collared Longspurs. In late morning we encountered a flock of about 45 longspurs about one half mile north of Highway 2 on the Percival Road. The flock was foraging along the side of the road. In the flock of Lapland Longspurs, we identified two male Chestnut-collared in breeding plumage.



The birds were the size of the Lapland Longspurs with sparrow-like conical bills. The top of their heads was black. There was white above the eye and a black stripe through the eye. The throat was yellow. The nape of the neck was chestnut-colored. The belly and breast were black. The back was brown with brown streaks. The black tails showed more white along the sides than the Lapland Longspurs.

The two birds were feeding together on the road. Eventually the Lapland Longspurs flew, but the two Chestnut-collared Longspurs returned to feed for several minutes at a distance of about 30 to 50 feet from our car.

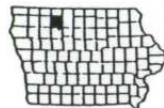
It is interesting to note that Tom Kent found Chestnut-collared Longspurs on the same date, 12 April, in 1995 in Sioux and Lyon counties in northwestern Iowa (IBL 66:61-63). We had previously found Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the same area in Fremont County on 22 and 23 April 1992 (IBL 62:81). All sightings occurred after heavy snowfall had concentrated migrating birds along the roads.

1405 Little John Rd. Bellevue, NE 68005

### LAZULI BUNTINGS TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN CLAY COUNTY

LEE A. SCHOENEWE

On 29 May 1995, I had spent the day birding with Harold White and after arriving home in the late afternoon, I received a phone call from Harold. He had received a phone message that a Lazuli Bunting was visiting a feeder just south of Spencer. The feeder was located on the acreage of Russ and Ellen Heine, a beautifully landscaped farmstead with a variety of trees, shrubs, and plants. They have a small man-made pond with water pumped up and cascading over rocks into a



pool that attracts warblers and other songbirds in migration. The bunting, a male in resplendent breeding plumage, was visiting a sunflower feeder. A number of people were able to see the bird which was coming to the feeder for the second day in a row.

One year later, on 1 June 1996, my wife Nancy and I were hiking a trail along the Little Sioux River approximately five miles east of the Heine acreage. At a spot where a small creek flowed through the wooded floodplain and into the river, a small bird popped up from the forest floor. It had a turquoise blue head, rusty colored breast, and a white belly. The tail and back were dark, and the wings were dark with white wingbars. There was turquoise on the rump also. The bird sang from an exposed perch at eye level, and the song was faster and more like a goldfinch when compared to that of an Indigo Bunting.

These sightings were the sixth and eighth accepted Lazuli Bunting records respectively in the state. To have them in consecutive years and located so close together makes it easy to speculate that the same bird was coming back to a stretch of Little Sioux River valley. Although the male in 1996 was found singing in appropriate open riparian woodland habitat, no evidence of nesting was confirmed.

518 West 4th Street, Spencer, IA 51301

### PACIFIC LOON IN DICKINSON COUNTY

ED THELEN

On the morning of 15 April 1997 I saw a Pacific Loon at the north end of West Okoboji in Dickinson County. I was approximately 20 yards from the loon in my boat when it first appeared. It soon dove and reappeared about 20 yards away on the other side of the boat. It then stayed on top swimming without diving for approximately 20 minutes.



Pacific Loon, Dickinson Co.,  
15 April 1997. Ed Thelen.

During this time I noted the following characteristics: small straight bill, rounded light-colored head, and prominent chinstrap. It had a dark back with some light flecks which were visible only when viewed at close range. Its eyes were in the dark part of the loon's head. The lower part of the loon's head, chin (except the chinstrap), throat, and chest were white or light colored. It had a dark forehead with a lighter colored nape and back of neck. The loon appeared somewhat smaller overall when compared to some nearby Common Loons. The loon was observed off and on by many people and was last seen on 26 May 1997. Only once did I see the loon in flight.

On 2 August 1997 I observed another Pacific Loon on Spirit Lake which I believe was the same bird seen the previous spring on West Okoboji. This bird was in the company of two Common Loons and observed approximately 100 yards off the west shore at the area known as Buffalo Run. Its plumage was identical to the bird found on West Okoboji. Perhaps it was pushed off West Okoboji by the high boat traffic after Memorial Day and found refuge during the summer on Spirit Lake. Spirit Lake

is the largest lake in Dickinson County with less shoreline development and less boating activity than West Okoboji. I also saw this bird on the morning of 5 August 1997 near the swimming beach off the south shore of Spirit Lake at the town of Orleans. This loon was also seen off Crandall's beach at the northwest corner of Spirit Lake on 11 August 1997 by Lee Schoenewe. As far as I know this was the last sighting of this loon.

According to *Birds in Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore, 1996) this is the 19th record of Pacific Loon in the state and only the second spring record. It is also the first record for Dickinson County.

15362 250th Ave., Spirit Lake, IA 51360

### WESTERN Tanager AT LACEY-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK

JIM FULLER



May 3, 1997 was planned as a morel mushroom hunt to Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. For most normal people, success in such a venture is contingent on keeping your eyes on the ground. But birders are by no means normal, and so it was that I spotted a bright yellow bird amongst the pink of a blooming redbud tree. For the next five minutes, I kept my eyes and binoculars up as I focused on a male Western Tanager just 30 feet away gleaning bugs from the blossoms.

No other bird was nearby so as to compare size, but I judged it to be a little larger than a House Sparrow. The bird had entirely yellow underparts with black back, wings and tail. It had not acquired a complete red head, as only the crown was bright red, and the sides of the face and throat showed a red blush. The eye was dark, and the short and stout bill was gray. The black wing exhibited two yellow wing bars, of which the top one was larger in size. The legs were dark. I did not hear the bird sing or call.

Western Tanager winters mainly from Mexico to Panama, and breeds in the western United States and Canada from southeastern Alaska to western Texas, with the closest area to Iowa being the Black Hills. It ranges widely as a vagrant, with records from virtually all states and provinces. In Iowa, it is considered casual, with the first record in 1969. Since that time, there have been eleven documented sightings, of which eight occurred in the spring from late April to mid-May. The other records were from June, October, and November. All records save one were of males, and all records were from different counties which were scattered throughout the state.

6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

### I.O.U. BUSINESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ames, 16 May 1998, 4:05-4:10 p.m.

Mark Proescholdt, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

Present: Dan Dorrance, Rick Hollis, Maridel Jackson, Ann Johnson, Mary Kuhlman, Curt Nelson, Mark Proescholdt, Jim Scheib, Carol Thompson.

96-35

## DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species How many? LAZULI BUNTING - 1 ♀  
 Location? LITTLE STOWX WILDLIFE AREA, CLAY CO.  
 Type of habitat? OPEN DECIDUOUS WOODS ALONG RIVER  
 When? date(s): 6/1/96 Time: . 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM  
 Who? your name and address  
 LEE A. SCHOENEWE 518 W. 4<sup>TH</sup> ST. SPENCER, IA. 51301  
 Others with you NANCY P. SCHOENEWE

Others before and after you JIM FULLER

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also describe voice and behavior. AS WE WALKED ALONG A TRAIL THROUGH THE WOODS, A SPARROW-SIZED BIRD FLEW UP FROM THE UNDERGROWTH TO ABOUT EYE LEVEL JUST AHEAD OF US. I SAW THE TURQUOISE BLUE HEAD, WHITE WING BARS AND RUSTY UPPER BREAST WITH WHITE ON THE BELLY. THE BIRD FLEW OFF INTO THE TREES. WE HEARD SINGING SIMILAR TO AN INDIGO BUNTING ONLY FASTER AND "MORE GOLDFINCHY". NANCY LOCATED THE BIRD ON AN OPEN PERCH AND WE WATCHED IT SINGING FOR 2-3 MINUTES. THE EYE AND BILL WERE DARK, AS WERE THE WINGS, TAIL AND BACK. THE RUMP WAS TURQUOISE. AS WE WALKED BACK

Similar species and how eliminated:

- INDIGO BUNTING - VOICE AND PLUMAGE

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: ~~PARTLY CLOUDY~~

Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: PARTLY CLOUDY AFTERNOON 10-50 YARDS 8X40 BINOCULARS

Previous experience with this species and similar ones:

SIGHTING 5/95 AND NUMEROUS PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN BLACK HILLS, S.D.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NONE

How long before field notes made? IMMEDIATELY  
 this form completed? 3 DAYS

Mail original form to field editor for this season.

THROUGH THE SAME AREA APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES LATER, THE BIRD AGAIN FLEW UP FROM THE FOREST FLOOR TO ABOUT EYE LEVEL AND WE GOT ANOTHER GOOD LOOK. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF HYBRIDIZATION.

DOCUMENTATION OF UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Lazuli Bunting (Adult male)

LOCATION: Woods along Little Sioux River (Clay County)

DATE & TIME: 2 June, 1996 (6:20 AM for less than 30 seconds)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240

OTHERS: Lee and Nancy Schoenewe, Harold White

BACKGROUND: Lee Schoenewe reported a male Lazuli Bunting to the Iowa Birdline on June 1. Since I was headed for a Minnesota fishing trip the next day, I thought I would search for the bird early the next morning. I arrived at daylight, and after a long walk and a search of about twenty minutes, I heard a song from the underbrush with which I was unfamiliar. The bird sang about four more times, before I could locate it about 25 feet away. I watched it as it sang two more times (less than 30 seconds). It flew away, and I was not able to relocate it, despite searching for another hour and a half.

DESCRIPTION: This was a small sparrow sized bird with short thick bill and relatively long tail. The upperparts and head were blue, with the back and tail darker. On the underparts, there was a brownish (tan) area between the blue of throat and white of the belly. I did see a wingbar.

Vocalization: I had been seeing and listening to singing Indigo Buntings in the area, but this song was much mellower (not harsh like the Indigo's), more musical, softer, and lasted longer.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Male Eastern Bluebird is larger, has reddish brown (not tan) on the breast, and the throat, and lacks a wingbar. This bird was not singing an Eastern Bluebird song, and was in the wrong habitat. Indigo bunting is entirely blue, lacks wingbar, and sings a much different song.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen a number of Lazuli Buntings in the western U.S.. However, I was not familiar with the song.

OPTICS & CONDITIONS: The viewing conditions, were not very good. It was early morning on a clear day, but the brushy area where the bird was seen was entirely in shadow. I was only about 25 feet away, but sighting was for less than 30 seconds. I was using Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Field notes were made after I returned to car, and this form was typed on 7 June.