

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 09/01/93

Smith's Longspur  
16 Apr 1982  
NE, Muscatine Co., IA  
\*T. Kent, \*C. Bendorf  
IBL 52:63; 53:36

Record Number: 82-19  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Thomas H. Kent  
Carl J. Bendorf

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 52:63  
Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 1-II, 5-III, 1-abstain

III, description poor (tk). Black and white triangle on face?

CB: Good clear.

III, Good descriptions.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation  
 by the Records Committee  
 of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Smith's Longspur

DATE SEEN: 16 April 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: NE Muscatine Co., Iowa, @ $\frac{1}{4}$  mi. S. of Rt. 6, near Co. Line.

OBSERVERS: T. Kent, C. Bendorf

DATE OF REVIEW: 22 August 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: mail vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: The committee felt that the descriptions, particularly the one by Bendorf, were quite good.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

82-19

What species? SMITH'S LONGSPUR How many? 50-estimatedLocation? Muscatine County, IA. 2 1/4 mile south of highway 6 on Johnson/Muscatine County line.Type of habitat? Very short grass stubble, field about 75 yards wide between two corn stubble fields.When? date(s): 16 April, 1982 time: 6:30 to 6:45 AMWho? your name and address: Carl J. Bendorf 825 7th Ave. Iowa City, IA. 52240others with you: Tom Kent Iowa City

others before or after you: \_\_\_\_\_

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

As we walked across field we began to flush small groups of birds. As they flew, they flashed white in the tail which reminded me of the white flash of the tail of a Junco. As they flew took off they made an ascending ticking sort of rattle call. We finally got a good look at a bird on the ground and noted a longspur size and shape bird. The bird was brownish on the back and the ~~h~~ tail was brownish as ~~the~~ the bird sat. The top of the head was black. The face was very striking with a bold pattern ~~XXXXXX~~ which can be described as a white triangle around a black triangle with a white spot in the center. We noted a prominent white shoulder patch on the folded brown wing. The bird was very bright yellow/gold on the breast and belly. This was a male Smith's Longspur in full breeding plumage.

We estimated about fifty birds ~~x~~ total in various stages of molt from brown winter plumage ~~x~~ to summer plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: No other long<sup>g</sup>spur has the black and white face pattern and bright yellow underparts.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Cloudy skies but fairly good light over our right shoulder. The bird described above was an estimated 15 yards away, 7X35 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: First for Smith's, familiar with Laplands, have seen McKown's once.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NONEHow long before field notes made? 7 hours this form completed? 45 days

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa 82-19

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 50 (est)Location? NW Muscatine Co. IA on Johnson Co. line 2½ mi. s. of route #6 -- Wright's farmType of habitat? short grassy field on high ground, corn stubble in adjacent fieldWhen? date(s): 16 Apr 1982 time: 6:20 to 6:40 AM (approx)Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City IA 52240others with you: Carl Bendorfothers before or after you: James Huntington saw birds several times in preceeding 2 weeks

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

"In short grass in loose flock. Seen in air and on ground. One in breeding plumage - probably others. Yellow underparts, white and black triangle on face, white outer tail feathers (all white), and white shoulder spot well seen. Some in partial moult. Same area where we first saw longspurs on 23rd of Mar -- we did not identify them."

Similar species and how eliminated: Male with face pattern, yellow underparts, wing patch, and white outer tail feathers is diagnostic. Others were in variable plumage and variable well seen in the grass. Longspur type note was quite evident although I have heard enough to be sure of separation of Smith's and Lapland. Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Bright early AM light to east, thunderstorm to west turning to rain before we left. Light on birds OK when they were in open. 20-50 yards (est). 8 x binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: seen 3 times previously

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? 1 hr. this form completed? 6 weeks

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