

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 09/01/93

Smith's Longspur
27 Mar 1982
north of Red Oak, Montgomery Co., IA
*R. Myers
IBL 52:63; 53:35

Record Number: 82-12
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Robert K. Myers

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 52:63

Records Committee: IBL 53:35

VOTE: 7-III

III, Well seen and described.

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

SPECIES: Smith's Longspur

DATE SEEN: 21 March 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: 4 mi. N. of Red Oak, Montgomery Co., Iowa

OBSERVERS: R. K. Myers

DATE OF REVIEW: 22 August 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: mail vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: The records committee felt that this bird was well seen and described.

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.

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 6Location? 4 mi. N. Red Oak - Montgomery CountyType of habitat? Hilly corn & stubble field - birds were on top of hillWhen? date(s): March 21, 1982 time: 10:10 AM to 10:15 AM + 1:00 PM - 1:30 PMWho? your name and address: Robert K. Myers, 1236 Sylvia Ave, Waterloo, Iowa, 50701others with you: Betsy Myers (my wife - not really a birder however)

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.

The birds were first flushed in a corn stubble field on top of a hill. I chased and reflushed the five birds three times before they left for good. Later I flushed and reflushed a single bird from the same general area.

The first thing I noticed was the "rattle" the birds ~~may~~ made when flushed. It was typically longspur but seemed higher, drier, more like a series of clicks than a loplund longspur. I also noted that the birds showed a lot of white in the tail - more than loplund.

The birds were about the size of house sparrows

I stalked the birds down ^{and} found two running (not hopping) down a corn row ahead of me. They stopped about 15' away and allowed excellent viewing. I moved in closer and all five flushed from the same spot where I only ~~8~~ saw two. This time I noticed white flashes coming from the wing area near the body on the two birds I was watching. I don't know if others showed this as they were gone too fast. I reflushed the birds again and saw the mark on one bird.

Similar species and how eliminated: The head pattern and buffy breast + belly (showing no white) eliminates other longspurs, water pipit, + horned larks.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Bright overcast (good viewing) - closest approach was about 15' (stepped off) -

I use 7X35 B&L Roof Prisms.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None with Smith's - I have seen and heard many loplund longspurs

References and persons consulted before writing description: Field Guide to Birds - (Peterson), Birds of North America - (Robbins)

How long before field notes made? 15 min. this form completed? 1 day

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

Please see attached sheet

Description (cont.)

The most obvious marks on the two birds I first studied were the head pattern and the buffy breast. The head markings were not as distinctive as the guides show the spring Smith's.

I noted the dark cap, dark ~~the~~ line coming to eye from back, and a dark collar coming around base of head meeting this "eye line" at back. This left a line (light) over eye and a light area under eye in cheek area. The eye was dark.

The white and black contrasts, as shown



Head pattern something like this.

in the guides, on the head were not seen, rather the contrast was more like very dark brown (to black) to light beige. I believe these birds were males and were ~~just~~ in molt just emerging from their winter plumage. The winter feathers had ~~been~~ been completely worn off. The throat, ~~and~~ breast, and belly were a uniform deep ~~to~~ buff. There were some fine darker streaks on upper breast. This buffy color extended in a band around the back of the bird's neck forming a collar. The wings and back were brown and the back had dark streaks. The white on the ~~the~~ lesser wing coverts of the first 2 birds appeared as only a short ^{white} line on shoulder not like a patch, as shown, but it could be seen when birds flushed.

The single bird I found later in the day was either a ♀ or a younger ♂ as the head pattern was not as distinctive and the white shoulder patch could not be seen at all. The throat, breast, belly, + neck collar were still the same deep yellow buff as in the other birds. The tail also still showed a lot of white and the call was the same.

I really did not notice the bill or leg color on any of the birds.