

Sharp-tailed Sparrow  
23 May 1981  
Ledges State Park, Boone Co., IA  
\*Gordon Brown  
IBL 51:63, 70, 52:43

Record Number: 81-09  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Gordon Brown

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 51:63, 70

Records Committee: IBL 52:43, 64:70

VOTE: 3 III, 2 IV, 2 V

V, Date and habitat unlikely.

III, Details minimal but I can't figure out what else it could be.

IV, Didn't give very complete description, items 9 & 10 blank, not written up for ten days.

IV, Documentation not sufficiently complete.

III, Description written some time after sighting, but critical characteristics noted. This species is a very late spring migrant (May 20-30) and overlooked by most of us.

REVOTE (1993): 7 A-D

A-D, The date is acceptable as one could expect.

A-D, Description less than detailed. Date is good for this species. I am confused about "white lines on nape." The prominent white lines on a Sharp-tailed are on the back. Could this be the result of waiting 10 days to write documentation?

A-D, Date is excellent, habitat probably OK for this expected species.

A-D, Species to be expected. Skimpy description highlights diagnostic field marks without sounding like a verbatim description from a field guide. Sufficient for 10 days delay in writing.

81-09

13 September 1993

To: IOU Records Committee  
From: Tom Kent  
Re: Request for reconsideration of record

**Record:** 81-09 Sharp-tailed Sparrow

**Reason for request:** Misconception by at least one reviewer.

**Comment:** The date is perfect for this species and apparently there is a marsh at this locality. I think the vote represents some hesitation about a young inexperienced observer with details written after ten days. I think the description is adequate and would be inclined in retrospect to accept the record. Like the Prairie Warbler at Yellow River Forest (81-DV), this record fits an expected pattern for an expected species.

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**FIELD REPORTS EDITOR**  
DR. THOMAS KENT  
211 Richards Street  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

28 October 1981

Gordon Brown  
922 Yuma Ave.  
Ames Ia 50010

Dear Gordon,

The Records Committee of the IOU reviewed your documentation of a Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Ledges Park on 23 May 1981. The opinions regarding the identification were variable. Attached are the comments.

RC 1981 3-III, 2-IV, 2-V

"V, date and habitat unlikely"

"III, details minimal but I can't figure out what else it could be."

"IV, didn't give a very complete description, items 9 & 10 blank, not written up for ten days."


"IV, documentation not sufficiently complete."

"III, description written sometime after sighting, but critical characters noted. This species is a very late spring migrant (May 20-30) and overlooked by most of us."

III means sight record beyond doubt, IV means probable but some doubt, and V means not enough information to judge. Obviously the committee cannot determine whether or not the bird occurred, but only judge the evidence presented.

Keep up the good work. I hope you will continue to send in field reports, especially when they involve such exciting sightings as this.

for the Records Committee,



T. H. Kent, secretary



1. Species Sharp Tailed Sparrow 2. Number: one  
 3. Location Upper Sedges at Lost Lake  
 4. Date: 5/23/81 5. Time Bird seen: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): This bird was about 5" long, a small thick bill, with a pointed tail. It had a orange triangle around the base and a black cap. Its back was redish with white lines on the nape.

7. Description of voice, if heard: none

8. Description of behavior: sat on top of a reed moving around with little rest

9. Habitat - general:  
 specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

11. Distance (how measured)? 20 feet

12. Optical equipment: binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: The bird was down in the grass sitting on top of a reed

15. Other observers: George Brown

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 10 days

Gordon Brown  
 Signature

Address: 922 Yuma Ave.

Date: June 3, 1981

City, State: Ames, Iowa