

Baird's Sparrow  
22 Apr 1992  
3 mi. NW Ida Grove, Ida Co., IA  
\*Ernzen, \*Poggensee  
IBL 62:81, 63:70

Record Number: 92-27  
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATIONS:

Peter Ernzen, 401 Taylor St., Ida Grove, IA 51445 (6/30/93)  
Don Poggensee, RR #1, Ida Grove, IA 51445 (6/30/93)

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Don Poggensee, P-0337

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:81  
Records Committee: IBL 63:70

VOTE: 1 A-P, 6 NA

A-P, This is one of the hardest species for me to accept. Markings on photo seem to agree with most field guides. Document seems to supplement photo enough for me to accept but with reservations.

NA, I believe these photographs clearly show a Savannah Sparrow. The stripes on the breast are extensive and coalesce into a breast spot which is common on Savannah Sparrows. This would almost never occur on Baird's as the necklace of stripes is very short and even. In addition, the head stripe, regardless of color, is very narrow, and does not appear to widen towards the nape. Lastly, these photos clearly show yellow coloration in the forepart of the eyebrow stripe and on facial area as is diagnostic of Savannah Sparrow. It is interesting to note that after the late April snowstorm, large numbers of Savannah Sparrows were seen along the road in the western strip to Iowa. I, too, stopped for a second look at several sparrows that looked "different." I believe there is much more variation in Savannah's than is apparent in the field guides. It may be, also, that these birds were further along into alternate plumage than we normally see with earlier migrating Savannahs.

NA, Unfortunately, I am voting on this record from a position of inexperience, having never seen Baird's Sparrow. Evidently, there is some disagreement as to whether the bird in the photo is the same as the bird in the documentation. The photo bird appears to have a central breast spot, which is sometimes found on Savannah. Despite the thoroughness of these documentations, I cannot be sure that the highly variable Savannah Sparrow has been eliminated. The head pattern is quite similar, and the extent of breast streaking involves a somewhat subjective judgement. In the event of a split vote on this record, outside review might be warranted.

NA, I am voting NA because the pictured bird is a Savannah Sparrow. In addition, the description doesn't mention the nape color which should be the same color as the crown stripe in Baird's and both Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows have wide variations in the color of the lores and crown stripes.

NA, The photos show Savannah Sparrow. The distinctive feature of Baird's Sparrow is an ochre crown stripe that is narrow in

front and widens toward the back of the head and on to the nape. It is best seen from behind. Savannah Sparrows are highly variable in appearance, which makes it difficult for me to judge the features described by the first observer. From the times given, the two observers were not there at the same time.

NA, Photos are of Savannah Sparrow. Shows yellow on lores, central breast spot and grayish on back of head/nape. Chestnut on scapulars not mentioned. Savannah is highly variable and I have seen several with hardly any streaking on the breast and some yellowish in the crown. The main basis of identification on this record is the dirty yellow crown. This alone does not clinch this as a record of Baird's Sparrow. Other marks noted could fit Savannah as well. This record is not beyond reasonable doubt for Baird's Sparrow.

NA, I feel the initial sighting of this sparrow by Mr. Erzen is a likely candidate for a Baird's Sparrow, but I am not relatively certain and feel I should vote NA at this time. The photos seem to be Savannah Sparrows with distinctive yellow lores, prominent crown stripe and a lot of streaking on breast and flanks with almost a dark breast spot. Please continue to send in documentations.



P-0337 #92-27

near Ida Grove, Ida Co., IA  
22 Apr 1992 Don Poggensee

Savannah Sparrow P-0337  
near Ida Grove, Ida Co., IA  
22 Apr 1992 Don Poggensee

0337

#92-27

r Ida Grove, Ida Co., IA  
Apr 1992 Don Poggensee

Savannah Sparrow P-0337  
near Ida Grove, Ida Co., IA  
22 Apr 1992 Don Poggensee

I feel confident with the initial sighting. Bird's Sparrow was the least of the Sparrows in my discussion making. I arrived at this conclusion primarily because of the head color down the middle of the crown.

I have reservations about subsequent sightings. I believe the picture to be that of a Savannah Sparrow.

This picture was taken approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hrs after the 1st sighting. The first sighting birds flew west across the corn field - see map - when I attempted to get out of the car for a closer look. The photo was taken across the road in the cow pasture.

In comparing photo with what I saw two things are dissimilar 1st the crown - narrower and less yellow 2nd neck lace was wider and covered more of the bird.

## DOCUMENTATION FORM

Sent by

Peter [unclear]

Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

92-27

Species BAIRDS SPARROWLocation IDA COUNTY (SEE MAP ATTACHED)Habitat See attached sheetDate(s) 4/22/92 Time 400 to 403Name and Address 401 TAYLOR ST. IDA GROVE IA 51445Other observers NONE

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 behavior and voice. I HESITATE USING THE WORD COHRE AS I AM NOT QUITE SURE ON COLOR. INITIALLY NOTICED SPARROW WITH WHAT I'LL CALL A DIRTY YELLOW CROWN COLOR WAS SIMILAR TO THAT SEEN IN LECONTE'S SPARROW. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS INCLUDED AN EXTREMELY ~~THIN~~ LIGHT NECKLACE, ESTIMATED IT TO BE APPROXIMATELY 1/3 LESS THAN THAT OF SAVANNAH SPARROW, SIZE WAS THAT SAVANNAH SPARROW. ~~OTHER~~ ~~THIN~~ CROWN STRIPE APPEARED LARGER THAN SAVANNAH SPARROW, LIGHT EYE STRIPE, LIGHT EAR PATCH, LIGHT ~~NO~~ MUSTACHE, SIDE & LIGHT STRIPES ON SHOULDERS.

Similar species and how eliminated: SAVANNAH SPARROW, HENSLAWS SPARROW, LE CONTE'S SPARROW. SAVANNAH SPARROW - DIRTY YELLOW DOWN TOP OF CROWN HENSLAWS WRONG COLOR, LE CONTE'S DIRTY YELLOW INITIALLY THOUGHT THIS SPARROW (YELLOW WAS FIRST THING NOTICED) ELIMINATED AFTER FURTHER STUDY FOR MORE DETAIL ON ALL SEE ATTACHED SHEETS.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain: SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: IN CAR LOOKING DOWN FROM APPROXIMATELY 10 FT.

(PACED) BINOCULARS. TASCOS ZIPFOCUS 7x15x35.

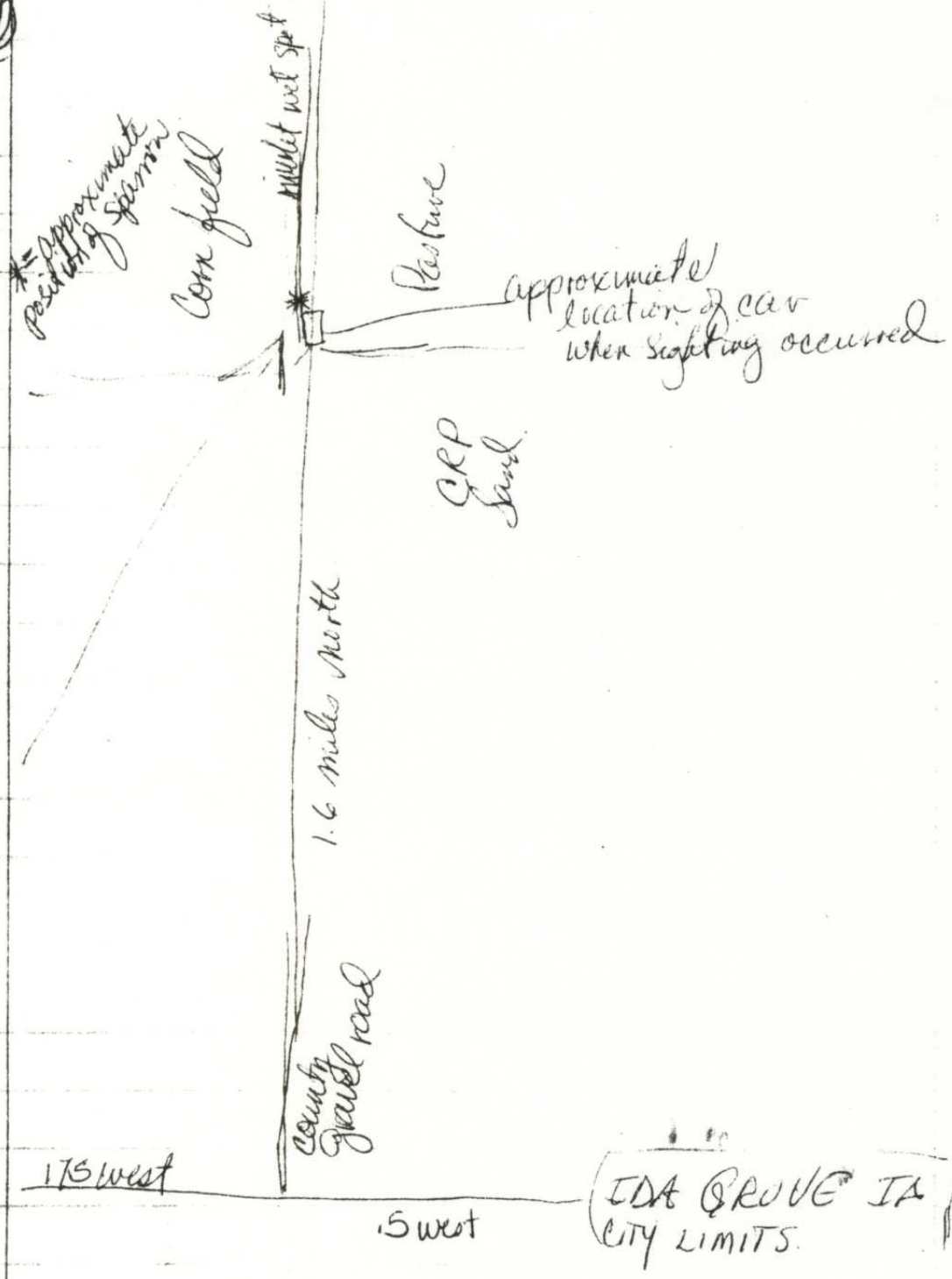
Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE. HAVE OBSERVED ALL OTHER SPECIES AT LEAST ONE TIME.

References and persons consulted before writing description: INITIALLY WROTE

DOWN OBSERVATIONS, THEN CONSULTED GOLDEN A GUIDE TO FIELD IDENTIFICATION BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, PETERSON A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS EAST OF THE ROCKIES

How long before field notes made? > 1 MIN. How long before this form

completed? NEXT DAY



Map where sighting occurred.

## DOCUMENTATION FORM

## Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

92-27

Species BAIRD'S SPARROWLocation APROX. 3 MILES NNW OF IDA GROVE, IOWAHabitat OPEN-WET ROADWAY, NEAR TALL GRASS SET-A-SIDE AREA.Date (s) 04-22-92 Time 5:15 P.M. to 6:05 P.M.Name and Address DON POGGENSEE R.R. # 1 IDA GROVE, IOWA 51445Other observers PETER ERNZEN 401 TAYLOR ST. IDA GROVE, IA 51445

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 behavior and voice.

SPARROW SIZE AND SHAPE WITH DISTINCTIVE ORANGE-BROWN STRIPE OVER THE HEAD. THE UPPER BREAST WAS SLIGHTLY STREAKED AND LOWER WAS WHITISH. HEARD SOUNDS OF SHORT TICKS. APROX 6 BIRDS WERE FEEDING ALONG A WET PASTURE NEAR A ROAD DITCH.

GOOD COLOR SLIDES WERE TAKEN FOR POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION. THE YELLOW ON SLIDES WAS LIGHTER THAT IN THE FIELD SIGHTING.

JUST BEFORE SIGHTING, A STRONG WINTER STORM HAD DUMPED UP TO 12 INCHES OF SNOW JUST TO OUR WEST WITH 50 M.P.H. WINDS AS REPORTED BY THE SIOUX CITY WEATHER STATION. WE WERE JUST TO THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE STORM AREA.

THE BAIRD'S WERE WITH SEVERAL OTHER SPECIES OF SPARROWS-FIELD, SONG, HARRIS AND SAVANNAH

Similar species and how eliminated: SEE BACK OF THIS FORM

HENSLOW AND LE CONTES'----- STUDIED REFERENCE BOOK AS TO HEAD PATTERNS AND TO COLORATIONS. LIGHT PHASE SAVANNA WAS ALSO CONSIDERED BUT THE YELLOW HEAD PATTERN WAS DISTINCTIVE.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain: BOTH OF US NOTED THE STRONG YELLOW-ORANGE COLOR OVER THE CROWN OF THE HEAD.

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

GOOD LIGHT, AND BEING VERY CLOSE TO THE BIRDS AS THEY FLEW BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE ROAD. VIEWED WITH A 700MM CANON CAMERA LEN.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

PHOTOGRAPHED MANY OF THE SPARROW SPECIES.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

GOLDEN PRESS BOOK--BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA-----DISCUSSED IDENTIFICATION WITH PETE ERNZEN

How long before field notes made? AS WAS SEEING. How long before this form

completed? NEXT DAY 4-23-92 9: A.M.



Explanatory Bird Signage in Use

WE STRONGLY CONSIDERED THE SAVANNAH AS WELL AS THE GRASSHOPPER SPARROW AS WE VIEW THE BAIRD'S SPARROWS. THE REAL DIFFERENCE WAS THE BROAD BAND OF ORANGE YELLOW OVER THE CROWN. THE SLIDES ARE NOT AS CLOSE OR AS DETAILED OVER THE CROWN AS WE VIEWED THEM IN THE FIELD.

Habitat

Date(s)

Name and Address

Other observers

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, feet, tail, under-tail, legs, feet). Also mention behavior and voice.

SPARROW EYE AND SHAPE WITH DISTINCTIVE ORANGE-YELLOW. THIS BIRD WAS NOT IDENTIFIED AS A GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. IT WAS IDENTIFIED AS A BAIRD'S SPARROW. THE BIRD WAS SEEN IN A FIELD WITH A BROAD BAND OF ORANGE YELLOW OVER THE CROWN. THE SLIDES WERE TAKEN FROM THE POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF THE BIRD. THE SLIDES WERE LIGHTER THAN THE FIELD PHOTOGRAPH.

JUST BEFORE DAWNING, A STORM WITHIN STORM AND LIGHTNING WENT ON TO OUR WEST WITH 50 M.P.H. WIND AS REPORTED BY THE LOCAL NEWS. WE WERE JUST TO THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE STORM. THE BAIRD'S WERE WITH SEVERAL OTHER SPECIES ON PATROL. THE BAIRD'S WERE WITH SEVERAL OTHER SPECIES ON PATROL.

HAIRD AND SAVANNAH  
Similar species and how eliminated: THE BACK OF THE BIRD

HEAVEN AND HE COUNTY, STUBBARD VERMONT FOR AS TO HAIRD AND SAVANNAH. LIGHT PHASE SAVANNAH WAS IN CONSIDERATION BUT THE HEAD PATTERNS ARE DISTINCTIVE.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? BOTH OF US NOTED THE STORM. THE CROWN OF THE BIRD.

If yes, explain: THE CROWN OF THE BIRD. THE CROWN OF THE BIRD. THE CROWN OF THE BIRD.

Working conditions give lighting, distance (by measurement), and camera equipment. GOOD LIGHT, AND BEING VERY CLOSE TO THE BIRD AS THE BIRD WAS VIEWED FROM THE ROAD. VIEWED WITH A 100MM CANON LENS. PREVIOUS SPARROWS WITH SPECIES AND SIMILAR COLOR.

PHOTOGRAPHED PART OF THE SPARROW SPECIES. HAZARDERS AND PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION. GOLDEN PHEASANT BIRD OR WOOD THRUSH. HOW FAR BEFORE FIELD NOTES WERE MADE IS NOT CLEAR. THE BIRD WAS IDENTIFIED AS A BAIRD'S SPARROW.

completely next day 4-23-52 9 A.M.