

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 09/01/93

Smith's Longspur
22 Apr 1984
west of Colo, Story Co., IA
*Steve Dinsmore, Gordon Brown
IBL 54:50; 55:58

Record Number: 84-13
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore
Gordon Brown

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:50
Records Committee: IBL 55:58

VOTE: 7-III

III, good details.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: SMITH'S LONGSPUR

DATE SEEN: Apr 22, 1984

SITE OF OBSERVATION: near Colo, Story County

OBSERVERS: Steve Dinsmore, Gordon Brown

DATE OF REVIEW: 1984

METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation by mail to Committee Members

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS:

This apparently regular and previously overlooked species was well-documented by several observers, including this record.

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.

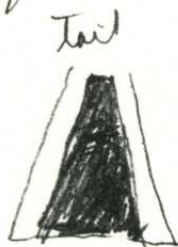
DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 30+Location? 2 miles w of Colo, story county on ^{old} Highway 30Type of habitat? Corn fieldWhen? date(s): 4/22/1984 time: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.Who? your name and address: Gordon Brown #922 Yuma Ave. Ames Ia 50010others with you: Steve Dinamoreothers before or after you: Hank Galated, John Hoogerwerf

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' overall appearance were that of a sparrow. The bill was the shape like a sparrow and was light in color. The head was all black except for a broad white stripe through the eye and a white cheek patch below and behind the eye. The neck was a buffy brown. The back was brown. The wings were streaked brown except for a white patch at the bend in the wing. The tail was black except for a white stripe running down both sides of the tail. The throat, belly and breast were all a buffy brown. The legs were light in color. The call was a short trill.

Behavior - The birds spent most time on the ground moving almost constantly. All flights were short and the birds flew in erratic patterns.



Similar species and how eliminated: this bird was from the other longspurs by its buffy breast, the pattern on the head, the white stripes on the tail, and its call.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Cloudy day and breezy, visibility poor. Distance 25' (est.) Binoculars 8x35 and Bushnell 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Just only seen Lapland Longspurs before but this is my first sighting of a Smith's Longspur.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Society field guide, no birds of North America, Peterson's field guide to birds, east to the Rockies

How long before field notes made? IM the field this form completed? 24 hours

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Smiths Longspur How many? at least 40 birds (1/3 males in breeding plumage, 2/3 imm. and winter plumaged birds)

Location? 2 miles w. of Colo, Story Co. on ^{old} Hwy. 30

Type of habitat? low area in corn field and grassy ditch along road

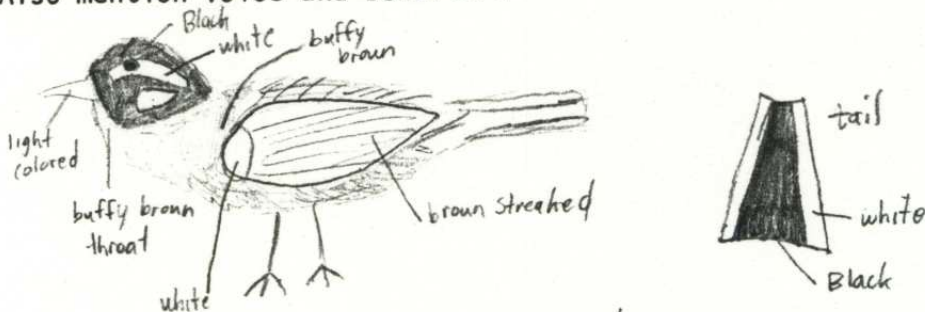
When? date(s): April 22, 1984 time: 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Who? your name and address: Steve Dinkmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, Ia. 50010

others with you: Gordon Brown, 922 Yuma, Ames, Ia. 50010

others before or after you: Hank Zalatel, 715 West St. Colo, Ia. 50010
John Hoogerhilde, Des Moines

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 following field marks were noted on the males; The birds appeared to be about 5-6 inches long when compared to the size of nearby Red-winged Blackbirds. The bill was light in color. The head was mostly black with a white streak through the eye and a white patch below it and behind the eye. The throat, back of neck, breast and belly were a uniform buffy brown to orange color. The wing was a streaked light brown color except for a white patch at the bend of the wing. The back was also a streaked light brown. The tail was black with white outer tail linings. The tail appeared to be slightly forked. The legs were not well seen, although they appeared to be dark in color. Call was a rattling ascending whistle pt-t-t-t-t-t-t. Also a buzzy zep-zup-zep with the middle note lower than the other two. A number of females and birds in winter plumage were also present. They all showed the buffy orange color on the underparts as well faint white areas as described above on the heads. All also showed white wing patch. All birds were feeding and were continually flying about the field in small groups. They were very active and were always running on the ground.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Distinguished from other Longspurs by the distinctive head pattern, buffy-orange underparts and white wing patch. The females and winter plumage birds were distinguished from Vesper and Savannah sparrows by the buffy-orange underparts, white wing patch, lack of streaking on underparts and darker colored legs.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: _____

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

Cloudy, overcast day. Intermittant snow and rain. Birds viewed at a distance of 20-75 ft. (estimated). Optical equipment was a 7x26 Bushnell compact binoculars and a Bausch and Lomb 20x telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen Lopland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs before.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Society Field Guide to Birds of N. America and Robbins Birds of N. America.

How long before field notes made? made in field this form completed? 45 min.

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