

Sprague's Pipit
27 May 1962
near La Porte City, Black Hawk Co., IA
Myrle Burk, others
Burk 1962

Record Number: 81-CY
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Burk, M.M. 1962. Both pipits at Waterloo. IBL 32:58-59.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

VOTE (1981): 1-II, 4-III, 2-IV

IV, poor detail. Back not described.

IV, 6 observers, 2 birds, one sighting. Descriptions not complete enough.

REVOTE (1981): 1-II, 2-III, 4-IV

III, Poor description, but leg color indicates key field mark.

IV, descr. not sufficiently detailed 'thin bill, yellowish legs'.

IV, details not conclusive.

IV, Date rather late -- not adequately separated from Savannah or Vesper Sparrows -- white outer tail feathers not as obvious in Sprague's as in Water Pipit -- latter has dark tail. Bill size can be hard to judge.

REVOTE (1993): 1 A-D, 6 NA

NA, I like this documentaion, especially the description of the behavior. I think the date is somewhat late, however. It's so late that one wonders about juvenile Horned Larks -- which would not, however, explain the "yellowish legs."

NA, Tough call. I don't think these were sparrows, which don't normally run around on bare ground. Dr. Burk was probably right on this one, but the whole question comes down to leg color, which can be tricky depending upon light or distance.

NA, More detail necessary to separate from sparrows. Distance?

NA, The date alone almost excludes either pipit. Highly likely that they were seeing Vesper Sparrows with young. Note that one reviewer is incorrect: Sprague's has two white outer tail feathers which are more conspicuous than American (King 1981).

81-CY

13 September 1993

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

Record: 81-CY Sprague's Pipit

Reason for request: Should this species be on the state list?

Comment: There is one accepted record for Sprague's Pipit, a sight record with brief description. Included here are four records that got a majority vote in 1981 and the one that was accepted. I question whether there is adequate evidence to keep this species on the state list.

Sprague's Pipit

Burk, M. M. 1962. Both Pipits at Waterloo. IBL 32:58-59.

Both Pipits at Waterloo. Six members of the Waterloo Audubon Society saw two Sprague's Pipits and one American Pipit on farm land north of La Porte City, Iowa, on May 27, 1962. 10

The Sprague's Pipits were feeding on sandy soil, bare except for scattered plants. Their light brown color blended well with the sandy background, making them difficult to see, easy to lose sight of, and easier to overlook entirely. That they were observing us seemed apparent for they sought to hide by squatting or crouching on the sand, facing us and mimicing the appearance of small stones. They remained motionless for some time, then ran, usually at right angles to our line of vision, and again crouched.

When they were moving we saw the general diagnostic characteristics; the light brown streaked plumage, the thin bill, the white outer tail feathers, and the yellowish legs.

The American Pipit was seen along the grassy fence line. When disturbed it flew in a sparrowlike manner along the grassway trying to conceal itself. On the nearby dusty roadbed where it had walked was a trail of its characteristics footprints. DR. MYRLE BURK, R. R. #2, Waterloo.

Brown 1971
p 538

Sprague's Pipit Anthus spragueii (Audubon)Rare migrant

Anderson (1907) cited a 1895 record, and DuMont (1911), with no record other than Anderson's, said "The present status is undetermined." 1
There are these recent records: 23 April, 1949, "northwest Iowa" 2
(Roberts, 1949); 16 April, 1950, Amana, Johnson Co. (PPL); 16 May, 4
1954, Polk Co. (GOH); 4 May, 1958, Polk Co. (Brown, 1958); 27 May, 5
1962, near LaPorte City, Black Hawk Co. (Burk, 1962); 4 April, 1968, 6
Shenandoah, Page Co. (FMB). Fall dates are all from Ogden, Boone 10
Co.: 11 October, 1949, 29 September, 30 October, and 1 November, 12
1959, 13 and 22 September, 1961 (JK). There is no Iowa specimen 37,8,9
extant.