

Sprague's Pipit
11 Apr 1978
Missouri Valley, Harrison Co., IA
*Ruth Gochenour
Halimi 1978

Record Number: 81-DD
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Ruth A. Gochenour

REFERENCE

Field Reports: IBL 48:75

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

VOTE (1981): 5-III, 2-IV

III, Good description, conservative observer.

IV, Documentation provided. 2 observers, only one of which had ever seen a pipit before. Description not very conclusive.

REVOTE (1981): 4-III, 3-IV

III, Were calls given on ground or in air as this species usually does?

III, Good description by conservative observer.

IV, because of inexperienced obs.

IV, early date, details not conclusive.

III, Ruth Gochenour is a careful observer -- bird was well described.

REVOTE (1993): 3 A-D, 4 NA

A-D, Good description. I know Ruth was very cautious and never reported anything unless she was very confident of the identification.

A-D, Thin description but convincing field marks noted. Location excellent. In contrast to 81-CY, we have two good field marks -- legs and back.

NA, Thin bill is only characteristic differentiating this bird from a Vesper Sparrow. Lack of observer's experience with pipits casts doubt on identity.

NA, There is nothing here to convince me that this was not a Vesper Sparrow. Need overall buff color, face pattern, and behavior (flight) to convince me of Sprague's.

81-DD

13 September 1993

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

Record: 81-DD 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.

Verifying Documentation

1. Species: Sprague's Pipit
2. Number: One
3. Location: Two miles north of Missouri Valley, Iowa
Harrison County
4. Date: April 11, 1978
5. Time bird seen: 11:00^{AM} (Observed for 10 min.)
6. Description: Small sparrow-like bird - very thin
~~the~~ bill, legs were color of human skin, white
~~the~~ outer tail feathers, streaking on back was
very predominate, Not blended together.
7. Description of voice: Heard, but no notes taken
8. Description of behavior: Walking in and out of
corn stubble.
9. Habitat: Plowed field - Corn stubble - Soil wet
from rain - deep grassy ditches on both sides of rd.
10. Similarly appearing species: American Pipit,
Vesper Sparrow - legs - flesh colored - not dark -
backed cinnamon shoulder patches - and streaking
on back as described in #6.
11. Distance - Approx. 10 ft. - 12. Optical equipment:
binoculars - 7x50, 7x35 and eyes.
13. Light: - Overcast, mist
14. Previous experience: No previous experience
with this bird or American Pipit - previous sightings
of Vesper Sparrow - 1973 - 1974 - 1975 - 1978

15. Other observers: Naomi Suenningesen, 303 Arball Dr.
San Francisco, Calif. 94132

16. Did the other agree? Yes, N. Suenningesen
had observed American Pipit and Vesper
Sparrows on other occasions.

17. Other observers who independently identified
this bird. Naomi Suenningesen.

18. Books and advice - Birds of North America,
Robins, A Field Guide to the Birds - Peterson. Books
did not influence this ~~ident~~ ~~description, but did~~
description, but did verify it. N. Suenningesen's
experience in observing Am. Pipit was
valuable advice.

19. How long after observing this bird did you
first write this description? This documentation
was taken from notes written immediately after
sighting

Ruth A. Lockman
116 No. West Street
Missouri Valley, Iowa
51555

May 31, 1975.

81-DD

Halmi, N. S. 1978. Field reports. Iowa Bird Life 48:69-77 p75

"A Sprague's Pipit observed at close range n. w. 15
of Missouri Valley on April 11 was documented (RGo)"