

Smith's Longspur
17 Apr 1983
east of Larson Marsh, Story Co., IA
*P. Martsching
IBL 53:55; 54:39

Record Number: 83-16
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Paul Martsching

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 53:55
Records Committee: IBL 54:39

VOTE: 7-III

III, well seen-birds virtually in breeding plumage.
III, good description.

83-16

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: SMITH'S LONGSPUR
DATE SEEN: 17 April 1983
SITE OF OBSERVATION: Story County
OBSERVERS: P. Martsching
DATE OF REVIEW: 1983
METHOD OF REVIEW: Mailing to Committee
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III
COMMENTS: These birds were well-described and virtually in breeding plumage.
The Committee unanimously accorded this record a III vote.
This was a well done documentation.

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.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Smith's Longspur 2. Number: eight plus

3. Location pothole one eighth mile east of Larsnn Marsh in Story County, Iowa

4. Date: 17 April, 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 11:40 to 11:55

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): spanish size, brownish head;

streaked brown back; brown tail with prominent white edges - especially noticed when just taking off; white shoulder patch; ^{on brown wings} orange-cream to orange tan breast and belly. None of the males had completely changed to summer plumage on the head, tho the ~~black~~ black pattern showed quite well on some. When three took off from the road abt 15 feet away from the car, the white shoulder patch showed surprizingly well. Saw three which flew out of ditch onto road. They went back into ditch. Saw two more in snow & grass on far side of ditch. Moved car ahead & stont: then saw seven take off from far side of ditch and one stayed.

also showed when birds were on ground between more prominent when flying

General appearance when taking off at close range.

7. Description of voice, if heard: In the general noise of a few hundred ~~Lapland~~ Lapland Longspurs not definitely heard.

8. Description of behavior: feeding in grassy area on either side of road ditch (which was nearly full of water). often out of sight in snow and grass.

9. Habitat - general: near pothole in cornfield.
specific: grassy areas along waterfilled roadside ditch



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

Lapland longspur - has less white on tail edges, much whiter below; male reddish patch on back of neck & fairly heavy black streaks on sides - most of the males were more or less changed to breeding plumage, altho few had completely changed. Vesper Sparrow does not have orange tan breast & belly or white shoulder patch. So had more or less black faces

11. Distance (how measured)? as close as 15 feet. most distant observations not more than 40 feet away. 12. Optical equipment: 8 X 50 binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): overcast; birds east and north of us

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: saw last year at Larson Marsh: have seen all four Longspurs in South Dakota;

15. Other observers: Fred Whitford Laplands were nearby.

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: A Field Guide to the Birds - Peterson Birds of North America - Golden Press these were looked at while the first three were still on the road as Fred is from Louisiana, & had never seen Smith's Longspurs before

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? notes while observing. description written 5 hours later.

Paul Martsching Address: 1120 Marston

Signature Paul Martsching

Date: 17 April, 1983 City, State: Ames, Iowa