

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 09/01/93

Smith's Longspur
18 Apr 1982
Larson's Marsh, Story Co., IA
*P. Martsching
IBL 52:63; 53:36

Record Number: 82-20
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Paul Martsching

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 52:63
Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 7-III

III, OK -- no description of tail pattern.
III, Male fairly well described.

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

SPECIES: Smith's Longspur

DATE SEEN: 18 April 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Lanson's Marsh, Story Co., Iowa.

OBSERVERS: P. Martsching

DATE OF REVIEW: 22 August 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: mail vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: The records committee felt that, although the tail pattern of the birds was not described, the documentation allowed unequivocal identification of the species.

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.

Species Smith's Longspur 2. Number: 2 or 3

3. Location Larson's Marsh (east of Ames) Story County, Iowa

4. Date: 18 April 1982 5. Time Bird seen: 2 pm (1/2 min) ~~to~~ 5:15 pm ^{fem (1 min)} ~~male~~ (10 sec)

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):

2 pm bird: sparrow sized, prominent black & white face pattern - black on top with black triangle on side of white face. Orangish buff below this with brownish wings & back. Did not get a really good view - was sitting under a fence in grass and in the shadow of tall grass.

female at 5:15 only saw from rear while perched on grass - much more finely marked on back than Savannah Sparrows we were flushing. Dropped to ground several feet away. about two feet from where she landed, got a good but short look at second male(? maybe one seen earlier?) The male had black & white face pattern like earlier bird, with deep

7. Description of voice, if heard: orange buff underparts & brown tinged buffy streaked not heard back & wings. It never flew tho we tried to flush it.

8. Description of behavior: I would be hard put to really say that the female was neither male flushed; stayed in grass Smith's L as I only saw it from rear & then it dropped to the ground, and so didn't see tail pattern.

9. Habitat - general: marsh with pond nearby
specific: wet grassy area - much old tall grass bent down by snow last winter.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
After seeing the first one and going thru all the pictures of sparrows was at a lose to know what I'd seen. Later we went back. The only sparrows with black & white face pattern (Wh Crnd & Wh Treated) are only black & white from the eyes up. Only realized was seeing a longspur about the time the last male dissappeared in the grass. Were unable to flush.

11. Distance (how measured)? 2pm 25 ft; fem 5:15 25ft; male 5:15 30 ft (est)
12. Optical equipment: 7 x 35 binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): clear; first bird to NW in shadow; other two to NE of me

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Have seen several in winter plumage in migration in S. Dak. Have seen Chestnut ^{Collared} ~~Song~~ &

15. Other observers: McCown's in breeding plumage in S. Dak.

Other person (from Louisiana) was unable to get a good look at any of them.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Field Guide to the Birds Peterson
Birds of North America Golden Press

It was easy to see what it was, once I realized that the birds were longspurs. I was surprized to see them in breeding plumage, as I'd supposed they would still be in winter plumage when migrating.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

one hour

Signature

Address: 1120 Marston

Date: 18 April 1982

City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010