

Smith's Longspur  
19 Apr 1984  
east of Hills, Johnson Co., IA  
\*T. Staudt, \*T. Kent  
IBL 54:50; 55:58

Record Number: 84-12  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Thomas J. Staudt (19 April)  
Thomas H. Kent (19 April)  
Thomas J. Staudt (7 May)

REFERENCES

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

VOTE: 2-II, 5-III

III, If Huntington would doc., would be a II.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation<sup>e</sup>

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: SMITH'S LONGSPUR

DATE SEEN: April 19, 1984

SITE OF OBSERVATION: near Hills, Johnson County

OBSERVERS: Tom Staudt, et al

DATE OF REVIEW: 1984

METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation by mail to Records Committee

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.

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 3 / 30-35Location? South east Johnson Co. 1 mile east and about 1/2 mile south of The Hills - Sand Rd intersectionType of habitat? farm fields left over from fall - one corn stubble, one fall plowedSmith's  
Longspurs  
were found  
here in  
March &  
April 1983When? date(s): April 19, 1984 time: 8:55 am to 9:25 am

Who? your name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas J. Staudt  
931 North Summit  
Iowa City, IA 52240others with you: noneothers before or after you: James Huntington had seen Smith's in the same fields in late March 1984

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.

Sparrow sized birds with white outer tail feathers and white wing patches. Underparts were buffy-orange and appeared unstreaked. This color extended from breast (possibly throat) to belly and included the sides. The back was dark brown. Facial area darker than back, blackish.

The birds were first seen about 8:55 am. A series of varied, loose rattles was heard and then 8 birds flew up from a field of corn stubble. The flight was quite erratic, one direction then the next, up and down. They stayed up about 8 minutes. As they flew over my location more birds joined them, flew west and landed in another field. I followed, at 9:23 I heard the rattle again and 30-35 birds flew up and away from me to the northwest.

The above description is based on observation of 3 birds from the second sighting. More than 3 of the birds had underparts as described above. Three had definite wing patches and <sup>white</sup> outer tail feathers. Their faces may have been patterned but I'm not positive. The white in the wings was in the shoulder area.

## Similar species and how eliminated:

possibly winter longspurs - England, not as much white in tail, no white wing patch

Chestnut-collared has white triangles in the tail may have a small white wing patch but has paler upper and under parts

vesper sparrow has white outer tail feathers but no wing patch and no rattle call.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, explain:

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

I was looking northwest with the sun behind me. No clouds

about 300 yds - birds in the air

7X binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

March and April sighting in 1982 and 1983

References and persons consulted before writing description: Audubon Master Guide for similar species commentsHow long before field notes made? right after observation this form completed? 2 hrs. of sighting

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 70Location? 2 e. 1 s. of Hills, Johnson Co. IAType of habitat? Farm land, corn stubbleWhen? date(s): 19 Apr 1984 time: 3:50 to 4:00 PMWho? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City IA 52240

others with you: \_\_\_\_\_

others before or after you: Tom Staudt (earlier in day)

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.

I walked into corn stubble and started flushing birds with white outer tail feathers, yellow underparts, and definite white patches on wing. They make a dry tick-tick-tick sound. I was able to look down the rows and see 3 on the ground. Underparts were light yellow and black on white face pattern was evident. These marks were seen again on birds as they flushed. Suddenly all took off and flew high overhead in a tight flock. They went so high that I could only see them with binoculars. Birds seen in same field as last year. I counted 20 then estimated rest at 70 total.

Similar species and how eliminated: No other species has these field marks. Note and behavior characteristic.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Overcast. As close as 75 yards (est), 10 x binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Seen last 3 years in Iowa, also in Alaska

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? 2 hrs this form completed? 2 hrs

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

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Smith's Longspar How many? 30 est.

Location? South east Johnson Co. - SAME location as April 19 1984 sighting

Type of habitat? corn stubble field with wet areas

When? date(s): May 7 1984 time: about 10 AM to

Who? your name and address: Thomas J. STAUDT 931 N. Summit Iowa City IA. 52240

others with you: none

others before or after you: Tom Kent April 1984 Juntas Huntington April & early May 1984

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.

rattle call heard on ground shortly before flight and in flight.

very erratic flight.

white outer tail feathers

white wing-shoulder area-patches

buffy-orange underparts

dark crown, white eye line, black triangle on white face.

This observation was of one bird coming off the ground and flying by mt. For the remaining 29 or so birds the rattle call and erratic flight were primary indicators of Smith's Longspurs. On some of these birds white outer tail feathers and white wing patches could be seen.

Similar species and how eliminated: see April 19th documentation, also on bird song tapes by both Peterson and the new National Geographic Society the only longspur that has a rattle call is Smith's.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? —

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Sunny and clear 15 to 20 feet 7X binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:  
Documentation April 19, 1984 sightings in March & April 1982 and 1983

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? 20 min this form completed? same day