

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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Chestnut-collared Longspur
10 Apr 1997
s. of Sutherland, O'Brien Co., IA
*Darwin Koenig
IBL 67:92, 68:86

Record Number: 97-23
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Darwin Koenig, P. P. Box 606, Paullina 51046 [*10/1/97]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:92
Records Committee: IBL 68:86
Henrickson, D. 1997. Chestnut-collared Longspur in Lyon
County. IBL 67:130.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Expected time of year and location.

A-D, Proof that I wasn't nuts to be out during that storm.

97-23

Chestnut-colored Longspur

Date: 10 Apr 97

Time: 1450 - 1510

Location: 2 miles east of Sutherland, O'Brien County, Iowa

Sky Condition: high overcast

Observation distance: 30 feet to 150 feet, mostly 50 - 70 feet.

Binoculars: 7x35 binoculars, 25x spotting scope

Other Birds Associated With or Close By: Ring-billed Gulls, Horned Larks, Am. Robins, Vesper Sparrows, Lapland Longspur.

Number Observed: 16

Description: Males (breeding plumage): about same size as vesper sparrow and Lapland longspur; black crown, white line above eye extending to back of head; black crescent starting behind eye and curving around "ear"; chestnut patch on hindneck; yellow throat and cheeks; white border between throat and black breast and upper belly; white lower belly and undertail coverts; back brown with black and white stripes; wings brown with whitish wingbars; tail white with black triangle.

Males (winter plumage): drabber than breeding plumaged males, with black areas (crown, chest, and upper belly) mottled with brown/buff; superciliary line, throat, chin, and cheeks buff; back striped with black and buff; lower belly and undertail coverts buff; tail white with black triangle; wing brown with white patch.

Females: basically brown above with darker stripes; buffy below with some streaking of breast and flanks; tail white with black triangle.

Except for the breeding plumaged males, the most striking part of the birds, and what initially drew my attention to them, was the tail pattern. I was able to observe the tails of all 16 individuals well as the birds were constantly fluttering about during feeding, when approached closely by the gulls, or scared by oncoming cars. They remained in the same short stretch of roadside, quickly returning when flushed by traffic. They were still there when I left.

Similar Species: Males are basically unmistakable: breeding plumaged males are different from Lapland longspurs by the yellow throat, chin, cheeks; black and white facial markings; more extensive black underparts, and tail pattern. Winter males are differentiated from McCowns and Lapland longspurs by the more extensive black mottling

on the crown, chest and upper belly, and the tail pattern. Females were distinguished by the tail pattern: Try as I would, I could not stretch the black tail triangle into an inverted black T pattern!! And I had ample opportunity to observe the tail patterns in a variety of angles, positions, and distances.

OBSERVER: DARWIN KOENIG
P.O. BOX 606
PAULLINA, IOWA 51046