

Lark Sparrow
20 Dec 1996
north of Newell, Buena Vista Co., IA
*Ed Thelen
IBL 67:62, 82

Record Number: 96-74
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Ed Thelen, RR 8725, Spirit Lake 51360

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:62
Records Committee: IBL 67:82

VOTE: 6 A-D, 1 NA [later changed to A-D]

A-D, Although the actual documentation was written some time after the fact, the original field notes mention breast spot and white on tail. The observer was familiar enough with Lark Sparrow to flush it to allow the tail pattern confirm the ID.

A-D, The documentation provides the details that were missing in the original notes.

NA, This record is based on the documenter's best memory of what the bird looked like after looking at field guides and no filed notes were taken afterwards. I am concerned that the details of this bird might be based on the field guides that were used.

A-D, Not unprecedented. Observer able to note diagnostic combination of features.

CHANGED VOTE: The NA voter call to change vote to A-D on 24 Aug 1997.

What species? LARK SPARROW - adult How many? 1Location? 1 mile N. of Newell along blacktop roadType of habitat? ROADSIDE - open fields - only cover in ditchWhen? date(s): 12-20-96 time: ~ 3:00pm to 3:10Who? your name and address: Ed Thelen RR 8725 SPIRIT LAKE, IA. 51360others with you: LINDA Thelen (wife) and kids

others before or after you: _____

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.

While driving south on blacktop about 1 mile NORTH of Newell in Buena Vista County I spotted a sparrow-sized bird feeding on the shoulder of the road. The first thing I noticed was a median stripe on its crown. Thinking it might be some longspur or other exotic bird, I pulled off the side of the road and observed it in more detail. I found myself looking at an adult lark sparrow. It had the distinctive lark sparrow facial features - a white throat and white mustache separated by a dark malar stripe. It had a reddish-brown ear patch and also a reddish-brown crown separated by a light colored stripe down the middle. A dark spot was very distinct on the bird's

Similar species and how eliminated:

unmistakable - clear breast, dark spot
 - white tipped tail
 - strong facial pattern

(over)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

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

GOOD - cloudy bright estimated 8x40
 - windy

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I see a few lark sparrows almost every year.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Looked at Peterson field guideHow long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 3/21/97

clear gray breast. Even in the strong wind the spot was obviously a spot and not just a ruffled feather.

To verify the Lark sparrow ID. I then got out of the car and flushed the bird. It flew about 20 yds exposing the white edges of its long tail. I was unable to tell if the tail was rounded or not. It flew weakly into some weeds about 20-25 yds from where I flushed it. Its flight was similar to a song sparrow. The wind was very strong which probably accounted for its weaker flight.

Season: WINTER Year: 1996-7

Name and address (print or type)

Ed Thelen
RR 8725
SPIRIT LAKE, IA 51360

Other observers (name, city):

Use first few lines to give weather and habitat conditions. Use line(s) below species data to give additional details, if needed. Mail to: ~~F. W. Kern, 211 Richards St., Iowa City IA 52240~~ by 1 Mar, 1 Jun, 1 Aug, or 1 Dec.

Use initials of obsv. on species line

SPECIES	NO.	DATE	LOCATION - COMMENT - OTHER OBSERVERS
LARK SPARROW	1	12-20	1 mile N. of Newell along blacktop Noticed head stripe first, splotch on chest, white on tail when flushed - it flew weakly 20-25 yards.

3/21/77

TOM,

Bob Cecil asked me to send you anything I had on my lark sparrow report for 12/20/96.

of the sighting until later.

Good Birding
Ed

I filled this out to the best of my memory. I didn't take any field notes because I didn't have any reservation on its identity.

Top is winter field report. Bottom is note with later documentation.

Also I wasn't aware of the significance (over)

THK