

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/24/00

Chestnut-collared Longspur
11 Apr 1997
northwest of Larchwood, Lyon Co., IA
*Dennis Henrickson
IBL 67:92, 68-86, Henrickson 1997

Record Number: 97-31
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

*Dennis Henrickson, 1371 450th Ave., Estherville [*10/1/97]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: 67:92

Records Committee:

Henrickson, D. 1997. Chestnut-collared Longspur in Lyon
County. IBL 67:130.

VOTE: 6 A-D, 1 NA

NA, The fine details really need to be seen. A description of
the face and throat would have clinched this probable
Chestnut-collared Longspur.

A-D, 1 male, brief but adequate view.

RE-VOTE (at meeting of 20 Sep 1997): no change

After submission of this report to the Iowa Records Committee, Bangma had opportunity to directly compare Ring-billed and California gulls. Not only did this bear out the tarsus/culmen length mentioned above, but he noted that the wing projection overlapped as well. Also, in the course of feeding a mixed group of gulls, he noted that the ring-bills in that group dragged their wings on the pavement more frequently than the Californias. While this may only apply to some feeding behavior, it certainly does bring the conventional wisdom into question.

One of the most striking things about the bird was the nearly white median wing coverts. We initially thought the bird had molted these feathers, displaying the white bases of underlying feathers. Under closer examination we felt that the feathers were in fact present, but were extremely faded. Later that day, we examined photographs in Grant (1982) and found a similar appearance in photos 476 and 479. In fact, we were struck by the overall similarity of #479 to our bird, allowing for the progression of molt.

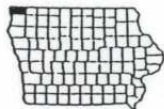
We thank the staff of the American Museum of Natural History, and in particular Helen Hays and Joe DiCostanzo, for their help in allowing access to the gull collection.

717 Anderson Ave., #8N, Cliffside Park, NJ 07010 and 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR IN LYON COUNTY

DENNIS HENRICKSON

Chestnut-collared Longspurs nest in southeastern South Dakota and extreme western Minnesota. They can be expected in western Iowa during migration. When an April snow brought large flocks of Lapland Longspurs to the Gruver area, I thought it time to check out northwestern Iowa for Chestnut-collared Longspurs.



Early on the morning of 11 April 1997, I set out, getting to Larchwood at 8:45 a.m. Taking highway K16 out of town, I encountered several large flocks of longspurs but could find no Chestnut-collared Longspurs among them. Turning around at the Minnesota border, I back tracked two miles and turned west on a gravel road. I had gone about three miles when it happened. A lone bird was on the side of the road about 40 feet ahead of me. I stopped and with my 7 x 40 binoculars, viewed the bird through the front windshield. Binoculars can spook birds and, after a few seconds, the bird flew away. It was a male in breeding plumage. I did get a good look at the ventral part of the bird as it was facing me. The large black ventral area was framed in white, and the throat appeared light. As it flew, the black triangle in the tail pattern was obvious. I tried for 15 to 20 minutes to relocate the bird without success. Then I wrote down my observations.

I looked for more Chestnut-collared Longspurs for the next several hours, but I could find only Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks.

1371 450th Avenue, Estherville, IA 51334

BLACK-HEADED GULL AT BIG CREEK LAKE

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 21 November 1994, I saw an adult Black-headed Gull at Big Creek Lake in Polk County. I watched the bird from 7:32-9:30 a.m. and again from 4:07-4:50 p.m. The bird had been reported earlier on 17 November by Ray Cummins. The bird was feeding with about 100 Bonaparte's Gulls opposite the beach area of the lake. It was clearly larger and longer-winged than the Bonaparte's. The most striking feature was the extensive dark color on the underside of the wing. Specifically, the undersides of the outer two primaries were white, with the undersides of the remaining flight feathers blackish, gradually becoming dark gray in the inner secondaries. Another feature noted was the bright red bill, which was slightly longer and thicker than that of a Bonaparte's. The legs were also bright red. The head, underparts, and tail were white except for a small black spot just behind each eye. The upperwing pattern was similar to that of a Bonaparte's, except that the gray color was much paler. This was especially evident when the bird was perched with Bonaparte's Gulls. This individual did not seem quite as large relative to Bonaparte's as other Black-headed Gulls I have seen, but it was still obviously larger. Based on the wing and head patterns, I aged the bird as an adult in basic plumage.



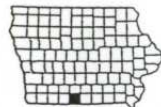
I observed the bird again on 23 November, but not thereafter. The number of Bonaparte's Gulls dropped dramatically after the 23rd, and the Black-headed Gull presumably departed with them. This represents the fourth record of a Black-headed Gull in Iowa. Other records were a basic adult on 2, 4 November 1989 at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County (S. Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 63:53-54, 1993), an alternate adult on 2 August 1994 at Spirit Lake, Dickinson County (S. Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 66:27-29, 1996), and an alternate adult and a juvenile from 2-12 August 1994 at the Kettleon Waterfowl Production Area, Dickinson County (S. Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 66:27-29, 1996).

612 1/2 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, CO 80521

FIRST RECORD OF A NEOTROPIC CORMORANT FOR IOWA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 4 May 1996, I arrived at the Little River Recreation Area in Decatur County. At 2:25 p.m., I noticed a flock of about 75 cormorants perched in trees roughly 500 meters distant. I quickly examined each bird, knowing there was a possibility of finding a Neotropic Cormorant. At the great distance, none of the birds really stood out, but I kept coming back to one bird that seemed a bit smaller, slimmer, and longer-tailed. At 2:45 p.m., at a distance of about 200 meters, the bird in question was easily identified as an adult Neotropic Cormorant. The bird was only slightly shorter than a Double-crested, but was proportioned much differently. The tail was about 50% longer, and the bird seemed slimmer-necked and smaller-headed. The bill was slightly shorter, thinner, and darker than that of a Double-crested. The throat patch was also smaller and duller, not bright orange like all nearby Double-crested Cormorants. The body, wings, and tail were a glossy brown/black color, similar to those of a Double-crested. The lower portion of the



DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

97-31

What species? Chestnut Collared Longspur (Calcarius ornatus) How many? 1

Location? Northwest of Larchwood, Lyon County

Type of Habitat? Roadside (snow covered)

When? date(s): 4/11/97 time: 10:30 to 10:32

Who? your name and address: Dennis Henrickson - 1371 450th Avenue - Estherville

Others with you: I got the idea to go from your article in Iowa Bird Life

Others before or after you: Spring 1996 (you found yours on 4/12 me on 4/11)

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

- (1) Male in breeding plumage standing along the north side of the road facing me
- (2) Black breast outlined all the way around in white
- (3) the throat appeared light
- (4) when it flew the black triangle was obvious (tail)
- (5) about size of lapland longspur.
- (6) the bird didn't pose for me long enough to really study fine detail

Similar species; how eliminated: Male lapland longspur has

- (1) much less ventral black
- (2) black streaks on the sides
- (3) black throat
- (4) tail mostly black

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? alone, Belva wasn't along
If yes, explain:

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

- (1) cloudy
- (2) about 40 ft (a little more distant than one house length)
- (3) Swarovski (7x42B) this binoculars does a good job of giving a clear picture through a front windshield

Previous experience with species and similar ones: seen in breeding plumage on territory at Pawnee National Grasslands, Colorado & in the Dakotas

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? within hour this form completed? about 2 months later
as soon as I gave up relocating the bird
Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).