





4/22/83

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? LINCOLN'S SPARROW How many? 1

Location? 908 East Briggs, Fairfield, Iowa; contiguous with Forest Park (Jefferson Co.)

Type of habitat? Ground-level feeding station by patio; in town, next to small park.

When? date(s): Feb. 3-11 & Feb. 15-18, '83 time: see below to \_\_\_\_\_

Who? your name and address: Diane C. Porter 908 E. Briggs, Fairfield, IA 52556

others with you: Michael K. Porter

others before or after you: none

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.

"Feb. 3, 1983 A rather unvigorous-looking Lincoln's sparrow came in the snow to where I'd cleared the ground and scattered seed. He seemed to be going for the white millet. He was smaller than a junco," (a flock of which were feeding with him) "with buffy breast, <sup>which was</sup> finely streaked, barely showing central spot. Rufous stripes on crown, but median stripe not rufous. Buffy mustache. Tiny white eye ring."

On Feb. 8-11, a song sparrow also frequented the feeding area, often at the same time, and the Lincoln's was smaller, slighter, with more delicate streaks, which were restricted to the area of the distinctive buffy band across the upper breast. The mustache of the Lincoln's was also buffy in contrast to the song sparrow's, and the latter's dark whisker, below the mustache, was also heavier and more pronounced.

(The Lincoln's) "seemed to have only one leg, or to use only one. At any rate, he hopped one-legged." The first day the bird huddled against the ground quite a bit, with its feathers fluffed out. (It was a cold day, but this bird seemed to be functioning less well than the other birds at the feeder.) "Upper mandible darker, lower lighter." Michael Porter and I discussed the buffy breast band, fine streaking, buffy mustache, very small eye ring, and rufous crown stripes while we were both observing the bird.

"Feb. 4 Lincoln's sparrow looks friskier today." The bird did seem to improve during the period he stayed and resumed using both legs.

I saw it most mornings at about 7 A.M. and most afternoons. When alarmed it often took shelter in a low part of a four-foot Scotch pine adjacent to the feeding area, while the juncos, finches, and other sparrows tended to fly up into branches of taller trees. This bird was less timid than other Lincoln sparrows I have known and seemed to become about as comfortable with being watched through the window as the house sparrows. I never heard it make any sound.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Buffy breast band and mustache ruled out song sparrow; distinct stripes the swamp sparrow and tree sparrow; small size the fox sparrow or female purple finch. I did not consider immature field sparrow at the time, but buffy mustache & rufous crown stripes seem to rule it out.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Lighting varied, but I observed the bird at least once each day on 13 days, some sunny, some overcast, some snowing, at morning and afternoon times. Distance varied from 15 to 30 feet. Binoculars: Zeiss 10X25 & Zeiss 8X30 mounted on tripod.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: One to four Lincoln's sparrows frequented my feeding station in Santa Barbara, CA, during winters 76-77, 77-78, 78-79, & 79-80.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None before writing initial description (in quotes); Peterson and Robbins during preparation of this report.

How long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? 2 months, 4 days  
upon first sighting. after final sighting.

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