

American Pipit

27 Feb 1982

Pocahontas, Pocahontas Co., Pocahontas Co., IA

\*W. Jardine

IBL 52:28, 53:36

Record Number: 82-04

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Wallace E. Jardine

REFERENCE

Field Reports: IBL 52:28

Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 3-III, 1-IV?III?, 1-IV, 1-V, 1-VI

IV, Horned Lark not eliminated.

III, Not very complete description, but features seen and behavior are convincing.

IV? III?, Smith's Longspur? (but wagged tail suggestive). No bill description.

V, What did bill look like, especially shape? L. Longspur not ruled out.

VI, Poor description -- no feel for overall appearance of bird. Habitat, behavior, and date all highly unusual.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation  
by the Records Committee  
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Water pipit

DATE SEEN: 27 Feb 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Pocahontas, Pocahontas Co., Iowa

OBSERVERS: Wallace Jardine

DATE OF REVIEW: 22 August 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: mail vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: V

COMMENTS: The records committee felt that, although the description was indeed suggestive of water pipit, especially the tail-wagging behavior, it was not sufficiently detailed to substantiate the occurrence of this species on such an unusual date and in such an atypical situation.

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.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

82-04

1. Species WATER PIPIT 2. Number 1
  3. Location RURAL POCAHONTAS, IA.
  4. Date: 2-27-82 5. Time Bird Seen: 4:00 PM to 4:10 PM
  6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
    1. GENERAL SIZE & COLORATION OF SPARROW.
    2. LIGHT COLOR EYE STRIPE.
    3. VERY LIGHT STREAKING ON BREAST, TENDING TOWARD OUTER EDGES.
    4. WALKED - DID NOT HOP.
    5. WHITE OUTER TAIL FEATHERS.
    6. FREQUENT TAIL BOBBING, SOMETIMES WOULD HOLD TAIL POINTING UP.
  7. Description of voice, if heard: NOT HEARD.
  8. Description of behavior: EATING SEED FROM GROUND AT BASE OF FEEDER.
  9. Habitat - general: RURAL BACKYARD (ABOUT 1 ACRE), YOUNG TREES & SHRUBS, BOUNDED ON THREE SIDES BY 100+ ACRE FIELDS,  
specific: BASE OF STONE FIREPLACE WITH FEEDER ON TOP, FIREPLACE IS 6' FROM CONCRETE PATIO IN BACK YARD.
  10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7, & 8.  
Explain: VESPER SPARROW. BREAST NOT STREAKED AS HEAVILY AS VESPER SPARROW & WHITE OUTER TAIL FEATHERS MORE PROMINENT THAN ON VESPER SPARROW.
  11. Distance (how measured)?  
18' EYEBALL.
  12. Optical equipment:  
10X BINOCULARS.
  13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
SUN → O BIRD NORTH FULL SUN, CLOUDLESS SKY,  
↑ EME
  14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
NONE WITH WATER PIPIT, CONSIDERABLE WITH VESPER SPARROW.
  15. Other observers: NONE.
  16. Did the others agree with your identification?
  17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: NONE.
  18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: PETERSON'S FIELD GUIDE, CONFIRMED WHAT I OBSERVED.
  19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
2 HRS.
- Signature: William E. Gardner Address: RR 2 BOX 9
- Date: 2-27-82 City, State: POCAHONTAS IA 5074