

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

**Species:** American Pipit - Two Individuals

**Location:** Runnells Wildlife Area, Polk County, IA

**Habitat:** Mudflats of Des Moines River floodplain

**Date:** 10 August 1991

**Time:** 11:30 to 11:40

**Name and Address:** Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

**Other observers:** Jim Sinclair, Beth Brown, Wyman Borts

**Description of bird:** These birds were sparrow-like birds with a horizontal, thrush-like posture as they ran across the mudflats picking at the mud. They had solid, dark grayish-brown head and upperparts with a bit rustier color to the mantle. On the dark face was a distinct buffy supercilium. The bill was thin and sharply pointed. The underparts were primarily light buff with heavy dark streaking on the upper breast creating a black necklace effect. We were unable to ascertain leg color. Neither bird called during observation.

**Similar species and how eliminated:** Sparrows and longspurs were eliminated by bill shape and posture. The rarer Sprague's Pipit was eliminated based on the relatively plain back and darker face.

**Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification?** No

**If yes, explain:**

**Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics):** The sun was in front of us and to our left at about a 75 degree angle to our line of vision. The birds were an estimated 100 yards away and seen through scopes at 25x-45x.

**Previous experience with species and similar ones:** More experience hearing them than seeing them, but Jim, Beth and I have all observed American Pipits on numerous occasions.

**References and persons consulted before writing description:** National Geographic guide

**How long before field notes made?** Immediately after observation

**How long before this form completed?** One day