

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Lecote's sparrow 2. Number: 10-20 (minimum)
3. Location Sand Point, on Coralville Reservoir n. of Iowa City IA.
4. Date: 26 Sept 1976 5. Time Birds seen: 4:15 PM to 4:45 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): Presumed adult birds: small sparrows, with large heads and short tails. Bill pinkish-brown. legs brownish. Face, throat, breast + flanks golden orange, with a ^{pale} grey triangular face patch, bordered above + below by a darker ~~z~~ edge-stripe. Crown dark brown, split by a narrow white crown-stripe. back of neck purple-brown (feathers had dark centers, lighter edges). belly light. Sides with neat, dark brownish streaking. back darker brown with light streaks. wings + tail brown.
7. Description of voice, if heard: did not obs bird in act of calling, - a 'tuk' note was heard in the grass, but there were 6 spp of sparrow + 2 marsh wrens around.
8. Description of behavior: - in waist-high weeds - when 'spished' would sit in weed tops. very tame.
9. Habitat - general: V. extensive weedy flats (waist to head-high) on shore of
specific: reservoir
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: grey face patch on yellow face, yellow-orange breast, narrow white crown stripe rule out Henslaw's, sharp-tail, grasshopper, Baird's sparrows.
11. Distance (how measured)? 10'-25' est. 12. Optical equipment: 8X32 binocs.
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): dull grey drizzly day - no sun to speak of.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: have seen Lecote's 2x (Fla, winter) once in Mass (sic). Have seen grasshopper (Mass, Md, IA) Henslaw's (IA, Md), sharp-tail (Md, Mass). Have never seen Baird's.
15. Other observers: C + B. Knight. C. Newlon
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: -
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: field notes made without consulting books; this transcribed from them later.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? see above

Michael C Newlon

Address: 408 Wales St.

Signature

Date: 30 Sept '76

City, State: Iowa City IA 52240

prob. imm.

also obs. were birds: upper parts, wings + tail a paler brown; locking purple on hind neck. orange of face + underparts much paler. streaking on sides extends across upper breast. crum-stripe washed with pale brown.

Could not accurately estimate numbers - every 20 feet or so we saw ~~one~~ one or more birds - and there were many acres of weedy flats - could have held hundreds of birds.

also present: sh-t. sparrows, song, savannah, Lincoln's, Swamp sparrows, both spp. of marsh wren.