

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sharp-tailed Sparrow How many? 2Location? Muskrat Slough, Jones Co., IowaType of habitat? grassy marsh, catails - NW end of marshWhen? date(s): 23 May 1982 time: 8:30 to 9:00 Am (est)Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City IA 52240others with you: Carl Bendorf, Tom Staudtothers 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.

"Sparrow distinctly smaller and slimmer than Swamp Sparrow in same field of view. In flight, tail short and spread. Did not flap tail. When sitting, tail had two points. Cap all dark to black, no median stripe. Buff-ochre face with dark, black appearing line back and below eye. I could not make it out as gray, but Tom Staudt had closer view and saw gray behind eye. Buff-ochre stripe over eye appeared whiter anteriorly, especially when seen head-on. Throat and upper breast buffy, slightly lighter than facial color, with blending to light gray-white belly and under tail coverts. Wing quite light gray from side. One bird seemed to have light gray patch in wing. Back had four narrow white streaks on gray-brown background. In flight, back and tail quite light and slightly yellowish. Birds heard several times giving two noted house song. [similar to tape we were playing - but not in response to tape]. Birds flushed from wet meadow and seen flying and sitting on small shrubs in area. Most of the time they were hidden, but we got several good views.

Similar species and how eliminated: Breast appeared plain to me, but Staudt saw a few streaks. Le Conte's Sparrow - has crown stripe and lacks white lines on back. Also late.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Overcast. 15-40 yards (est). 8x binoculars.Previous experience with species and similar ones: none. Have seen many Le Conte's.References and persons consulted before writing description: none; conversed with Bendorf and Staudt.How long before field notes made? 30 min this form completed? 4 hrs

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