

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Vesper Sparrow How many? 1

Location? 5 mi. east and 2 mi. north of Ames, Story Co., IA

Type of Habitat? sitting on gravel road in agricultural area

When? date(s): 16 Dec 1989 time: 2:40 to 2:56 p.m.

Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others with you: Andy Fix

Others before or after you: _____

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

A small sparrow, streaked underneath. There was a prominent wing bar on each wing. The central tail feathers were dark and the outer couple of feathers were white. Distinct light brown streaking on upper breast gradually faded to an unmarked lower belly. The chin was white. The bird had a prominent white ring around each eye. Bill was pinkish at base, dark on distal portion. Legs were pink. On the ground, the bird had a very erect posture and ran and hopped rapidly along the road. The flight was undulating and very reminiscent of a Horned Lark. The upperparts and rest of wings were brown. The bird lacked a central ~~breast~~ breast spot. The undertail was white.

Similar species; how eliminated:

The white eye ring, tail pattern, pattern of streaking on the breast, and habitat eliminates other sparrows, especially Savannah, Song, and Lincoln.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No

If yes, explain: _____

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

Sky cloudy to partly cloudy, but light was still excellent. Bird viewed from as close as 15 feet. I used Bushnell 7x35 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I am very familiar with Vesper Sparrows and other sparrow of possible confusion.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None

How long before field notes made? on spot this form completed? 6 hours

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).