

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Clay-colored Sparrow (Spizella pallida) How many? 1 maleLocation? Volga Lake State Pake, Fayette Co., IAType of habitat? Second growth area with mainly Sumac and E. Red Cedar in overgrown fieldWhen? date(s): July 7, 1985 time: 6:30 am to 6:50 amWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Noothers before or after you: Jim Fuller, Iowa City

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.

A Clay-colored Sparrow has been seen in this same location for the past two or three years. A nest has never been located but there has been a male on territory for these two or three years. I have never seen more than the one singing male as he toured his territory; a female, or at least two birds of this species, have not been seen at the same time and place there at Volga Lake. The bird definitely had a territory staked out and followed a routine route around his territory singing at about eight to ten locations around and inside the limits of the territory. The bird had a white superciliary line above the eye and a brownish ear patch with a distinct thin whisker stripe. The top of the head was brownish with several black streaks running down to the neck and a grayish central crown stripe running from the top of the head down to the neck. The back was streaked with black and the nape was a gray color. The wings and tail were dark brown to black in color. The breast was a clear whitish color. The feet and bill were a brownish color with a yellowish tinge to them. The birds song was insect-like with from three to five buzzy notes all on the same pitch.

Similar species and how eliminated: This birds song and coloration clearly marked it as a Clay-colored Sparrow.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

The bird sang in a 360 circle around me as it went around its territory, the day was sunny with the bird approaching as close as approx. 50 to 75 feet at the closest using Leitz 10X40 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen many Clay-colored Sparrows

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 20 minutes this form completed? 3 days

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240