

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Henslow's Sparrow How many? 1 (one)Location? Johnson Co. just east of Swan Lake  
small marsh area. The bird was perched low in a small clump of shrubs at theType of habitat? water edge. The marsh is surrounded by a grassy habitat.When? date(s): September 29 1983 time: 2:30 pm to For about 10 min.Who? your name and address: THOMAS J. STAUDTothers with you: noneothers 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.

This was a Flat-headed short-tailed sparrow, not at all active. The head was olive-greenish colored the crown was streaked. More specifically there was a light narrow not easily seen crown strip and dark broader strips on the sides of the crown. The superciliary area was a goldish-olive. The eye color was not noted. There was a thin dark line extending from the rear of the eye over the auricular area and a wider short dark streak below. The auricular and nape were an olive-greenish color. The nape color was broken at the center of the neck with a dark area that spread out into a streaked back.

The chin and throat of the bird were white. The breast and flanks were a buffy color. Both the breast and flanks had dull grayish-brown streaking. The belly and underparts were a dingy white.

The wings of the bird were a chestnut color overall with the color on the bend of the wing much more prominent and fading towards the tips of the primaries. The legs and feet appeared purplish in color. The bill was dark gray with the lower mandible appearing slightly lighter.

A Swamp sparrow and a Lincoln's sparrow were in the same shrub during the time I observed the Henslow's sparrow. The Swamp sparrow also had a reddish wing color but not the same shade or extent as the Henslow's. The Swamp sparrow was grayish in fact and breast which ~~color~~ differs with the description of the Henslow's above. The Lincoln's sparrow was buffy on the breast and finely streaked. The streaks were much more plentiful and more prominent than on the Henslow's buffy breast. Both these birds were much more active than the Henslow's sparrow.

Similar species and how eliminated: After recording the above notes I referred to Peterson's A Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies. He indicated that different ages of Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows could be mistaken for each other. The lack of prominent streaking on the breast and flanks of this bird may indicate an adult Grasshopper. However, the streaked olive-greenish head with dark marks in the auricular and the chestnut wing color eliminate the Grasshopper and any other sparrow.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Viewing conditions very good. A full sunny afternoon with the sun behind and slightly to my left (west). I was looking almost straight north. The bird was about 15 feet away.  
I was using 7X Bushnell binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: limited. 1 sighting May 1982 cone marsh, on the nesting area at Hayden Prairie June 1981, and a sighting at this same grassy location May 1985.

References and persons consulted before writing description: as indicated, Peterson's guide for Grasshopper sparrow comparison.

How long before field notes made? <sup>notes were made on a</sup> tape recorder immediately this form completed? October 4, 1983  
<sub>after sighting</sub>

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