

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Henslow's Sparrow How many? 3
 Location? Van Buren Co. - (Section 8 of Des Moines Township) (S.W. of Lacey - Keosauqua S.P.)
 Type of habitat? Tall, grassy pasture that's quite extensive
 When? date(s): June 9, 1987 time: 7:55 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.
 Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowa
 others with you: Beth Proescholdt
 others before or after you: Bob and John Cecil, Jim Sandrock, Jim Fuller

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.

We were slowly driving along this grass pasture when I heard a "se-lick" and we stopped. After searching a bit we found this light-colored sparrow singing from a weed head in with the grass. We watched it with binoculars and a scope. It was a small sparrow with a light crown stripe, a distinctive whitish throat, and flat-headed and short-tailed. Its breast was a light coloring. It had a light brownish back. Its rump was lighter brown than its darker wings which had lighter lines in them contrasting with the darker wings. At the end the bird turned and faced me and I could see a "smudge" look on its upper breast. All the time we were there on this calm evening this bird sang and sang. Each time it sang it would throw back its head and sing "se-lick". As we left at 8:40 p.m., it was still singing. As we drove back along more pasture, we heard two more singing males and I saw one of them in the fading light.

Similar species and how eliminated:

A Grasshopper Sparrow has a definitely different song than the distinctive "se-lick" of the Henslow's Sparrow.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Mostly clear evening with the light behind us. The sparrow was 50 yards away at first and moved 2 times—the last time was 40-45 yards away (estimated). 8X30 Binocs and 22X Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Saw and heard my first Henslow's Sparrow last summer.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geog. Birds of N. America and Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? June 15, 1987

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