

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Smith's Longspur How many? 120Location? 1 mile south of the HWY 17 Bridge across Saylorville Reservoir, Polk CountyType of habitat? on grassy road shoulder and gravel along roadWhen? date(s): 23 March 1985 time: _____ to _____Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010others with you: Eric Munsen, Amesothers 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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Rather small birds about 5" long.

Very active - running along ground and in grass

When they flushed, they flew in a loose flock and circled overhead before

In flight, their call was a rapid, ticking "pititit pititit"

Most of the birds were females or still in winter plumage. There were only 12-15 full breeding males.

Females or winter pl. - head was pale with some streaks on crown - ear was whitish underparts uniform buffy color. Back was streaked with brown. Some faint white on shoulder of some birds. Bill and legs dark.

Males - head white except for black crown and black diamond on ear. Underparts a rich tan or orange color. Back brown. Buff color extended across back on the collar. Bill and legs dark



Similar species and how eliminated:

Eliminated from other longspurs and Vesper Sparrow by combination of buffy underparts, white shoulder patch on males, white on outer tail feathers and distinctive black markings on males head.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NoIf yes, explain: —

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

Light was good with sun behind us. Estimated viewing distance 30-50 feet. I used Nikon 8x23 Binoculars and a BTL 20x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen Smith's and other longspurs in Iowa, as well as Vesper Sparrows.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Robbins, et al. Field Guide to Birds of North America. also NGS Field Guide to Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? 2 weeks

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