

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species SMITH'S LONGSPUR 2. Number: two

3. Location 3½ miles West of Hendricksons Marsh, Story County, Iowa

4. Date: 30 March 1985 5. Time Bird seen: various time between 3:45 to 4:15

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

In flock of 300 Lapland longspurs - it was overcast with some rain & slushy snow so they all appeared darkish grayish brown. Were all in a soybean field where the soybeans were on 5-6 inch high ridges, parallel with the road. The birds kept dropping back between the ridges, usually facing into the wind blowing hard out of the east. ~~The~~ 4 or 5 times I saw one bird with much wider white edges on the tail, and twice saw two birds at once with the wider white edges. One real good look with the 20 X 80 binoculars showed the outer two feathers on each side of the tail to be white all the way



7. Description of voice, if heard: from rump to tail tip.

~~xxxxxx~~ a rapid clinking sound much different from the sounds of Laplands.

8. Description of behavior: the same sound I heard the ones make I saw two years ago.  
foraging between the ridges in a soybean field, every little bit flying up & moving a few feet.

9. Habitat - general: agricultural area  
specific: soybean stubble field

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7, & 8, Explain:  
Vesper Sparrow - has longer tail (There were two of these by the road)  
Pipit - has longer tail

(these birds <sup>(Smith's)</sup> were easy to distinguish from Laplands because of so much more white on the sides of the tail)

11. Distance (how measured)? 15 yd to 100 yd  
walked part of it.

12. Optical equipment:  
7 x 35 & 20 x 80 binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
sky overcast; birds in field to south of road; some rain & slushy snow., windy

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Saw in 1982 & 1983

15. Other observers:

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS, BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
2 hours

Signature *Carl W. Martens* Address: 1120 Marston

Date: AMMY 30 March 1985 City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010