

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Savannah Sparrow

How Many? 1

Location? Bays Branch WMA, Guthrie Co. (NW parking lot)

Habitat? walking around on parking lot and mowed grassy area next to the lot

Date? 8 Jan 1987

Time? 10:50-11:00 A.M.

Observers Name and address: Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird: A small sparrow-sized bird walking on the gravel. The underparts were white with heavy brown streaking on the breast and sides. The throat was white and unstreaked. The back and wings were light brown and the back was lightly streaked with darker brown. The wings were unmarked (no wingbars). The crown was darker brown with a light median stripe. The face was brown with a dark whisker mark and yellowish lores. The tail was brown and fairly long. Legs were bright pink. Bill was short, conical, and light colored. In flight, the bird lacked white outer tail feathers.

Similar species and how eliminated: Grasshopper Sparrow (very unlikely in winter) was eliminated by the longer tail and lack of a flat crown. Vesper Sparrow eliminated by the yellow lores, streaking across the entire breast, and lack of white outer tail feathers. Song Sparrow eliminated by smaller size, yellow lores, and overall lighter coloration. All longspurs eliminated by the lack of any white on the tail.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun behind me and the sky partly cloudy. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 30 feet. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen many Vesper, Savannah, and Song sparrows in Iowa. I have also seen Lapland, Smith's, and Chestnut-collared longspurs in Iowa.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made? 1 hour

How long before this form was completed? 4 hours