

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

Red 2/5/04 wpl

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name): BAIRD'S SPARROW		(Scientific Name) <i>Ammodramus bairdii</i>
Date(s) of occurrence: 26 September 2000		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Unknown	Plumage: Adult
Exact Location: South side of Big Johnson Reservoir		
County: El Paso County	Nearest town: Security	Elevation: 5810 msl
Length of observation: Approximately 30 seconds	Time(s) of observation: Roughly 5:30 MDST	
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you:		
Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Mark Janos		
Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Facing east with setting sun to back		
Optical equipment used: 8 x 40 Binoculars		
Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): Varied between 10 and 30 feet.		
Was bird(s) photographed? No	If so, have you submitted photos?	
Who took the photographs?		
Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Short grasslands along lakeshore		
Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): Observed when flushed at close distance from the ground. It flew low (only about 2 feet off the ground) and dove back into the grass. Did observe the bird walking in front of me. It would quickly scoot across sparser areas and then stop at the edge of thicker grass.		
Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):		
Overall Size and Shape: The bird appeared to be short-tailed, large-headed, buffy-tan overall, small, and was very skulky.		
Head: The head was an orange tinge and contained three separate dark spots in the auriculars; the largest spot was on the lower cheek with another spot on the rear of the face and a third mainly being an enlargement of the dark moustache. The crown contained two dark crown strips that separated an orange median stripe. An eye line was present but was broken along with the moustache stripe (which was strongest at the rear of the face); no postocular line was present. The neck and nape were buffy-colored with fine dark streaks.		
Bill: Relatively large-billed (for an <i>Ammodramus</i>). The bill was grayish-pink in color.		
Underparts: The breast was mostly white except for widely-spaced short, dark streaks that formed a necklace. The belly and vent were also white though some yellowish coloration was present along the flanks; the flanks also contained some diffuse chestnut streaking.		
Mantle and Wings: The mantle contained dark vertical streaking due to vertical dark inner feathers that were fringed with ochre. The outer edges of the coverts and secondaries were fringed with rust.		
Tail: Relatively long and square. The color was brownish-gray and was edged in white on the outer rectrices (which was noticed in flight).		
Legs: Pinkish		
Describe bird's call or song: None heard		

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

The nearest species similar to Baird's Sparrow represent other members of the Genus *Ammodramus* and another, larger species, Savannah Sparrow. In Colorado, *Ammodramus* species with potential to occur, regularly or as vagrants include Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. A brief discussion of differences between these species and the subject bird is presented below.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Grasshopper Sparrows usually display a more flat-headed (though dependent upon posture) and shorter tailed look. Differing from Baird's, Grasshopper Sparrows show a whitish median crown stripe (not orangish), lacks dark spots on head (as Baird's does) except for a single spot on the rear auriculars, shows a grayish swash across rear of face (lacking in Baird's), has a buff face-neck-breast-and vent (lighter at the belly) with little to no streaking (streaking confined to edges of scapulars), and has more rufous on back and wings with complex spotting.

LeConte's Sparrow: LeConte's Sparrow's are smaller billed than Baird's. The face of a LeConte's is a bright orange-yellow except for a gray auricular patch and white lores. The lateral crown stripes are blacker and borders a white (not orange) median crown stripe. The nape is streaked with purple and the mantle is a more rufous-brown. The breast, flanks, and vent are a light orange instead of being mostly white as in Baird's. The flanks of LeConte's contain much heavier broad streaking and the tertials are edged in white.

Henslow's Sparrow: Henslow's are much greener overall instead of the ochre/black/white coloration of Baird's and typically show a flat-headed appearance. The median crown stripe is greenish instead of orange and there is a thin dark line extending from the rear of the eye and broadening onto the nape and rear auriculars into a thin, fan-shaped dark spot. A dark throat stripe borders a white throat. The upper breast is greenish-orange and streaked with fine dark streaking. These streaks on a Henslow's extend across the flanks into long strands (not broken as in Baird's). The wings are rufous and the mantle, scapulars, and coverts are mottled with white scaling.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Nelson's Sharp-tailed are a much brighter and deeper orange overall with a dark gray auricular patch and nape. They also possess a dark gray crown (with no median stripe), a dark gray mantle with white stripes, rusty wings, and brighter orange flanks.

Savannah Sparrow: Savannah Sparrows are larger, longer-winged, longer-tailed, and longer-bodied than Baird's Sparrow's. The crown stripe on a Savannah is greatly reduced. Savannah's also have yellowish lores (and tanner face), a dark eye-line extending from the rear portion of the eye posteriorly, a white-throat separated by dark streaking on the upper breast. This streaking on the breast joins to form a dark "V" or spot along the mid-breast. The dark streaking extends along the flanks and is more extensive than on a Baird's Sparrow.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? Have observed other birds in North Dakota and Arizona.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): None

Is this report from notes made during or after XX observation or later from memory

Date of written report: 01/18/01

Reporting observer: Larry Semo

Signature:



Reporting Observer's Address: 9054 Dover Street

City: Westminster

State: Colorado

Zip: 80021

**Send report to:
Colorado Birds Record Committee
c/o Bill Lisowsky
2919 Silverplume Dr.
Ft. Collins, Co. 80526**

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

7-0 (A)

Rcd 2/2/01 wpl

BAIRD'S SPARROW
Ammodramus bairdiiLocation: Big Johnson Reservoir, near Widefield, El Paso County, Colorado.Date: September 26, 2000

I was birding Big Johnson Reservoir alone on the morning of September 26th. It was clear and sunny. I was there to observe the Little and Sabine's gulls previously reported from the lake. At about 8:10 a.m. I walked down from the upper edge of the bluff surrounding this open, plains reservoir to get closer to the gulls on the shore. I was walking across the nearly barren shore which had been left exposed earlier in the summer from the receding water. This broad shore was covered in short weeds and drying grasses. As I walked across this sparse cover I occasionally scared up Savannah, Song and even a White-crowned Sparrow. The Baird's Sparrow flushed out of this sparse weedy area and flew erratically and very low over the weeds and dropped quickly into an area of pure, short grass about 75 yards distant. I walked towards the spot and finally observed the bird with my binoculars from about 30 feet distance as it crouched in the grass. (Something I have not been able to do the last two springs in s.e. Colorado). I was surprised that I was able to find it and observe it with little difficulty. I even put my scope on the bird and got fabulous views for about 5 minutes. Then the bird flew a longer distance and landed on the edge of the cut bank and I again put it in the scope, this time from about 50 yards distance. The bird was silent.

Description:

In flight this was a small, slim dark sparrow with a longish tail. In flight, the outer tail was paler, perhaps white, but not sharply white-bordered. On the ground this was clearly an Ammodramus sparrow, with a relatively large head, flat forehead and largish bill. It was apparently an adult bird. The head and face was well-patterned and distinctive. It had an orangish, tan face, with a dark crown that had a pale, though not white, central crown stripe. The face was bordered with small dark lines: a clear one at the lower edge of the face, and a dark mark behind the eye. It had a dark, brown or blackish "moustache" line, that went from the corner of the bill, down to the edge of the breast. The uppersides were beautiful and well marked, with the back showing quite a dark background, dark brown or chocolate, with superimposed tan lines that were composed of the pale tan fringes of the scapulars. The wing was scaly and brown/blackish. The undersides were white with a band of sharp, black streaks entirely across the breast. The flanks were white with a few brownish streaks extending nearly to the vent. The bill was large and pale with a dark upper surface. The legs were dull pinkish gray.

Similar Species:

The large, heavy, conical bill, spiky tail, large head and flat forehead indicate an Ammodramus sparrow. Savannah Sparrow is much smaller-billed, different proportions, has heavily, not lightly, streaked flanks, has a continuous dark line through the eye (not a black spot behind the eye), and usually has distinctly yellow lores. Juvenile Grasshopper Sparrow has a plainer face, is more orangish underneath. Le Conte's Sparrow has oranger tones to face and undersides, and both these species lack the pronounced, dark moustache line. Henslow's and Sharp-tailed Sparrows have oranger tones and differently patterned faces.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the Ammodramus sp. before, including a similar look at a Baird's Sparrow in Arizona in the early 90s.

This report is prepared from notes made after observation.

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001



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