

11. 26 Sep 01 (c)

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-82

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Le Conte's Sparrow | Ammodramus leconteii
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s): 15 January 2001

Number of birds seen: 3 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult

Locality: John Martin wash SW of Rd 22/16 Elevation: 4000'?

Nearest town: Fort Lyon County: Bent

Time(s) observed: early afternoon

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): About 1 min (bird 1) 15 sec (bird 2) 5 min (bird 3)

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

none

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

none that I know of

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

good (from behind me)

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 8x42 B&W Gites

Distance, and how measured: As close as 20'

If photographed, type of equipment and film: _____

Who else photographed the bird? _____

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Birds were flushed from dry, tallish grasses about 20 yards from edge of cottonails. Usually they would fly about 30-40' then dive back in grass or cottonails. Two of the birds perched in tops of grass on side of cottonail after flushing and before disappearing out of sight. One seen running thru the grass and popping up 10 feet from where landed.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Small, pale sparrow with a lot of yellow-buff crests. Flight is distinctive but hard to describe. Compared to other sparrows in area (song, swamp), body was held more parallel to the ground (others were "tail-heavy"). Face and breast bright yellow-buff. Cheek patch (auricular) gray. Thick post-auricular dark "comma" (point of comma touching eye). Stripes across mid-breast and on flanks to the undertail area. Belly white. Dark brown stripe on each side of crown, mid-crown stripe white and wide. Ring of small, fine, purple-brown stripes across nape. Back alternating brown & buff stripes. Bill pale (grayish?). Legs pink. Mid-wing (secondaries?) rusty. No eye-ring, although on bird #3 eye seemed large ("wide-eyed" look).

Description (continued):

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

Silent

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Dryland full of grasses (including very fine, "angel hair" species) next to sage/yucca (upland) and cattails (lowland).

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Row of stripes across rump and white central v-bar eliminated Sharp-tailed. More yellow than gray on the side, sparrow, esp. The buff orange tinge. Not greenish like Heenslows. Feat worn and ragged, pointy tail indicated Ammodramus, plus skulky behavior.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

Saw 3 in this exact locale last year. Saw 3 in Oklahoma in winter '94. Have never seen Sharp-tailed. Have not seen Heenslows. Have seen 100's of song, swamp, savannah.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification: bird guides

a) at time of observation:

none

b) after observation:

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation from memory X
Date and time report was written: 3/2/01

Reporting observer: David Leatherman Signature: David Leatherman

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