

RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD

NEW STATE RECORD

ACCEPTED

REJECTED *JK 7/26*

Species: EASTERN MEADOWLARK

Sturnella magna

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 8 and 9, 1976

Time Bird Seen: Various times to on both days

Locality: Red Lion State Wildlife Area

Nearest Town: Crook

County: Logan

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
None		

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Bright, clear; birds observed in different relationships to sunlight.

Distance from bird (how measured): 20 feet to 200 feet (estimated).

Number of Birds Seen: Six Sex: Unknown Plumage: Breeding adults

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Typical meadowlark behavior. Sitting on fence posts, on top of telephone posts, on overhead wires delivering songs. Also flying about grassy meadows with fluttering flight - alternately sailing. Alighting in grass and disappearing only to reappear a short time later, fluttering off to a nearby singing perch or into the grass again. Observed walking in grass.

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

Obviously meadowlarks. Same size and appearance as Western Meadowlarks. Didn't clearly see the tail patterns as depicted in some field guides. Could not isolate Eastern and Western Meadowlarks side-by-side to compare whether one is browner (or grayer) than other.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

A clear, high pitched, slurred whistle - "see-yoo, see-ayer", not broken like Western Meadowlark's double-noted song. Much higher pitched than Western Meadowlark. Call note: a high, buzzy trill which is introduced by a preliminary different note as follows: "Bzert-tit, tit, tit, tit, tit, tttt", much different than Western Meadowlark's more rolling chatter. Also, a nasal "wert, wert" (Westerns give a "tuck"). Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Grassy meadows interspersed with alkali ponds.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Only similar species would be the Western Meadowlark. Separation made basically by songs and calls. Supposedly Western Meadowlarks "learn" Eastern Meadowlarks' songs (and vice-versa?). However, with six singing birds all in one area plainly giving Eastern Meadowlarks' song and calls, it doesn't appear likely that these could be Western Meadowlarks. I followed two birds around the area for about fifteen minutes and never heard either of them give any thing other than typical Eastern Meadowlark song and calls. Also, other well qualified field people have observed these birds on different occasions over the past two years and generally agree that the Red Lion birds are Eastern Meadowlarks.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I grew up with Eastern Meadowlarks in the Chicago area as well as on Long New, York.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard Field Guides supported observation (songs and calls).

This report was written from notes made during X after X observation; from memory _____

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