

Species: BAIRD'S SPARROW

Ammodramus bairdii

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 8 and 9, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 6:15 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.-MDT

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: Clear, bright; Sunlight directly on bird.

Distance from bird (how measured): 150 feet (estimated).

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Breeding adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

My attention was called to this bird by hearing its song coming from near the grass-lined alkaline ponds. Finally located the bird sitting a top of a tussock of grass about twelve inches above the water's edge. Bird threw back its head and delivered its song for a full 25 minutes each day. I did not see it fly.

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:

Small sparrow, about 5 inches. Pale, short conical beak. Eye, dark. Crown, brown with prominent buffy median streak. Face and cheeks noticeably brownish-tellow. Chin and throat, white. Breast, buffy with narrow band of fine black streaks, resembling a necklace. Belly, sides and flanks, white and without streaking. Back, brown with black streaking. Wings, brown without prominent wingbars. Tail, brown.

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

"Zip-zip-zip" followed by a lower pitched trill delivered while perched a top of a tussock of grass.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Alkali ponds surrounded by extensive grassy meadows.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Savannah Sparrow: Has much more streaking on breast, sides and flanks. Narrow light median stripe through crown. Yellow spot over eye. Song, more insect-like, drier.

LeConte's Sparrow: Underparts streaked only on sides. Lacks "necklace". Has bright ocher eyeline and breast. White stripe through crown. Song is a barely audible "hiss".

Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Solid crown. Little if any streaking on underparts. Song is very different.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Flat-headed. Unstreaked buffy breast. Song, thin, dry, insect-like, sometimes barely audible.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen this species only twice before, both times in Colorado. This unquestionably was my best look. Have never seen LeConte's Sparrow. Very familiar with Savannah Sparrows from throughout the United States. Have seen Grasshopper Sparrows commonly (some years) in Colorado and on Long Island, New York (Hither Hills State Park), Nebraska and Texas. Am quite familiar with Sharp-tailed Sparrows from the salt marshes of Long Island, New York where they are common breeders.

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

Standard Field Guides supported observation.

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

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