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Rec 2/11/00
(? photos)

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

IXI

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

Species: Leconte's Sparrow
(Vernacular Name)Ammodramus leconteii
(Scientific Name)Date(s): 3-5 February 2000Number of birds seen: 4 (at least) Sex: ? Plumage: Adult (I think)Locality: John Martin Reservoir (northwest marsh) Elevation: 3800'
1/4 mile west of Bent CR 16 about 1/4 mile south of Rd 33Nearest town: Fort Lyon County: BentTime(s) observed: mid to late afternoonDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): very brief to 5+ minutes

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

I was alone on 3 & 4 Feb. Daniel Thompson saw 1 individual well enough to identify on 5 Feb.

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

Brandon Percival and others may have followed up on my report. I believe Chris Woods saw a Le Conte's sparrow near here earlier in January.

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

various. All three days were mostly sunny with very thin haze of thin clouds, warm.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Big E lensesDistance, and how measured: up to 5 feet (closest)If photographed, type of equipment and film: 300 Tokina telephoto PK-100 film

Who else photographed the bird?

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):
Flusted from clumps of broad-bladed grass mixed with various other grasses and "weeds". Bird would typically make a "flutter", jerky direct low flight and drop down to similar habitat or a few occasions they flew directly into cattail/sedge mats and either perched on them for a time or quickly disappeared. On ground, after run in mouselike fashion, puffed head & quickly disappeared.

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 observed in the field: medium to medium-small pale striped sparrow with brown "glow", ragged tail. Head and upper breast mustard yellow, as a base color. Head with a blackish lateral crown stripe. wide white central stripe that was yellowish toward the front. Prominent gray auricular patch with a thin black line coming from the eye defining its upper edge. This line widened to a black, irregular triangle toward the side of the nape. Lower rear part 2

Description (continued): The auricular patch, most individuals showed a very thin ring of rusty, sharp tick marks across the yellow breast. The sides of the breast showed thin stripes. These stripes extended all along the flanks and got broader toward the base of the tail. The belly was white. The nape was gray, with thin rusty-purple stripes. The bill was sharply conical and of average sparrow length. The eye was dark with a prominent white eyering. The eyering gave the bird a "big-eyed", alert look from close range. Pink legs. Back evenly dark striped with wide buff feather margins.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): Essentially the birds were silent. I heard a few high-pitched chips but could never tell if these were from the LeConte's or nearby Song & Swamp Sparrows.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: Marsh wet marsh margin with very heavy weed-growth. Marsh was cattails & sedges. Do not know the name of the grasses but I believe two birds were consistently flushed each day from a grass with wheat-like head (Canadian Wild Rye?). Gray-brown color.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? Overall yellow head color was too consistent for even the yellowest Grasshopper Sparrow races. Otherwise similar. Gray nape with rusty stripes and white central stripe separated it from Saltmarsh or Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

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

I saw 3 LeConte's Sparrows in Feb '94 at Sooner Lake / Ponca City, OK. I have seen hundreds of Grasshopper Sparrows, 1 Baird's Sparrow & Sharp-tails of either sp., 0 Henslow's.

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

a) at time of observation:

b) after observation: Rising & Beadle, Nat'l. Geo., etc.

This report was written from reports made during after observation from memory

Date and time report was written: 8 Feb 2000

Reporting observer: David Leatherman Signature: David Leatherman

Address: 412 Stover St #7

Ft Collins, CO 80524

Return to:

Bill Prather

C.F.O. Official Records Committee

13810 WCR 1

Longmont, Colorado 80504

2000-154

CFO-ORC-FILE# _____

Rcd 4/14/00 wpl
(3 photos)

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

Results: _____

Species:

Le Conte's Sparrow

Ammodramus leconteii

Dates: 2/12/00

Number of birds seen: about 6

Sex: unknown

Plumage: adult basic

Locality: Marsh west of 16th a little south of JJ near Ft. Lyons, CO.

Elevation: not sure. I believe about 4200 feet.

Nearest town: Ft. Lyons

County: Bent

Time observed: around 8-9 am

Duration of observation: most individuals where observed for a few seconds at a time. The individual in the attached photos sat still for a couple of minutes.

Other observers with you: Brandon Percival, Mark Janos, Bob & Lea Ann Brown, Todd Dilley, Ira Sanders, Tammy Ellsworth.

Other observers who saw the bird independently:

Light conditions: The light was not very strong and my camera's light meter was only getting about 1/250 second shutter speed at f5.6 with ASA100 film. I believe it was overcast.

Optical equipment: Leica 10x42 binoculars, photos taken with Canon A2E using a Sigma 400 APO Macro lens. The photos were blown up, cropped, and auto-equalized using Corel PhotoPaint, then printed.

Distance from bird: I did not take any notes but I think the photographed one was about 20 feet away.

Describe the bird's behavior: The birds were mostly staying low in clumps of grass. The individual in the photograph seemed curious about the sound of the motor drive on my camera and moved into better view after I took a couple of pictures.

Describe the bird (what you actually saw):

I took no notes but from the photos the following can be observed.

Head: Streaked nape - the two side shots make the nape look unstreaked but that is just because those two photos are a little out of focus. Broad, straw-colored supercilium extending from lores to nape. Crown has white center stripe bordered by two dark stripes. The dark from the outer stripes flecks into the center stripe. The eye is in a small gray patch. A narrow triangular patch extends backwark from the center of the eye. There is a faint malar strip separating the area below the eye from the throat. The area below the eye and the gray patch around the eye is straw-colored. The throat is straw-colored.

Back and sides: Heavily streaked. The back has three white streaks.

D WQ

Tail: The tail is rather wimpy looking and is jagged at the end.

Wings: The wings are short and blend in with the back and sides except that the primaries are grayish.

Bare parts: A fairly small bill that was pale.

Underparts: Just a bit of the belly is visible and appears to be white.

Size: Small like a sparrow. I don't really remember if it was bigger or smaller than some of the other sparrows.

Describe the bird's song and call if heard: I don't remember.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: It was tall grasses near a marsh.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species:

Grasshopper Sparrow: Does not have straw-colored supercilium or gray patch around eye.

Baird's Sparrow. Has buffy central crown stripe and finer side streaks on crown.

Nelson's/Saltmarsh Sparrow. Has gray unstreaked nape and gray central crown stripe.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: I have seen many Grasshopper Sparrows. Last summer I spent a week and a half in Minnesota and saw many Le Conte's Sparrows, one Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (excellent views of a singing bird in a scope), and a poor look at a Baird's Sparrow.

List books if they helped in your identification: A Field Guide to North American Birds, second edition, by National Geographic Society. The Sparrows of the United States and Canada, by James D. Rising.

This report was written from notes taken during , or after observation or from memory x and from photos.

Reporting observer:

David W. Quesenberry

Signature: David W. Quesenberry

Address:

6254 S. Elmira CIR E
Englewood, CO 80111

2000-154

CFO-RC FILE #

RESULTS:

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY)

SPECIES: LE CONTE'S SPARROW
(Common Name)

AMMODRAMUS LECONTEI
(Scientific Name)

DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION: 19 FEBRUARY 2000

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 5 SEX: UNKNOWN PLUMAGE: WINTER

EXACT LOCATION: WEST OF COUNTY ROAD 16, 1/4 MILE SOUTH OF ROAD JJ

COUNTY: BENT NEAREST TOWN: FORT LYON ELEVATION: 3800'?

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: TWICE PERIODIC 20 SECS TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 11 AM - 12:30 PM
NUMEROUS TIMES IN FLIGHT

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW THE BIRD(S) WITH YOU:

John Vanderpoel

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S):

DAVID LEATHERMAN, BRANDON PERCIVAL, SEVERAL OTHERS.

LIGHT CONDITIONS (QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION):

BRIGHT SUNLIGHT, MOSTLY BEHIND US.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: 10 x 40 BINOCULARS.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): ONCE PERIODIC 15' AWAY.

WAS BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? ? IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS? No

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? _____

DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED:

THE BIRDS WERE IN A WEEDY MEADOW, BUT CLOSE TO A VERY SMALL STREAM / DRAINAGE DITCH THAT HAD QUITE EXTENSIVE CATTAILS. I WOULD NOT CALL IT A CATTAIL MARSH, BUT RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS WERE USING IT.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION):

THE BIRDS WERE DISTURBED FROM THE SOMEWHAT WET AREA QUITE NEAR THE CATTAILS, AND USUALLY FLEW TO, AND DISAPPEARED IN, THE CATTAILS.

THE BIRDS HAD A WEAK FLIGHT, AND SHORT TAILED LOOK, WHEN IN FLIGHT.

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 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 OF FIELD NOTES):

SMALL SPARROW, BIGGER BODIED THAN SPIZELLA SPECIES, BUT WITH A SHORT TAIL. APPEARED LIGHTEST BROWN IN FLIGHT, WITH OBVIOUS ORANGE IN THE FACE. SEEN BRIEFLY, BUT WELL, TWICE FOR ABOUT 20 SECS. BROAD ORANGE EYELINE, GRAY CHEEK WITH ORANGE BELOW. THIN CENTRAL CROWN STRIPE WAS WHITE. UPPER BREAST WAS TAN WITH FAINT STREAKS, CENTRAL AND LOWER BREAST WAS WHITE, WITH TAN AREAS ON THE FLANKS. HAD TAN COLORED STREAKS ON UPPER BACK, BUT NAPE NOT WELL SEEN. LEG AND BILL COLOR NOT NOTED. TAIL SHORT AND FLIGHT WAS WEAK.

DESCRIBE BIRD'S CALL OR SONG:

ONE BIRD DID CALL, BUT I CAN'T DESCRIBE IT. HOWEVER, IT WAS MUCH QUIETER AND WEAKER THAN THE CALLS OF MOST SPARROW SPECIES.

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM:

NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW: WHITE, NOT GRAY, CENTRAL CROWN STRIPE, PALE OVERALL.

SAVANNAH SPARROW: ORANGE IN FACE, TAN UPPER BREAST, MUCH WEAKER FLIGHT.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW: ORANGE IN FACE, BREAST HAD MORE EXTENSIVE WHITE, PALE OVERALL.

GRASS HOPPER SPARROW: FACE PATTERN AND BREAST PATTERN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT; HABITAT.

SWAMP SPARROW: HEAD AND BREAST PATTERNS VERY DIFFERENT. NO RUFous IN WINGS.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES?

HAVE SEEN ALL THE RARE AMMODRAMUS SPARROWS ONCE, OR JUST A FEW, TIMES, EXCEPT FOR BAIRD'S SPARROW. VERY EXPERIENCED WITH GRASS HOPPER SPARROW.

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

LOOKED AT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEFORE AND AFTER, NOT DURING, OBSERVATION

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING OR AFTER ✓ OBSERVATION,
OR LATER FROM MEMORY .

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT: 20 FEB 2000

REPORTING OBSERVER: PETER R. GENT

OBSERVER ADDRESS:

55 S 35th ST
Boulder
CO 80303

SIGNATURE: Peter R. Gent

SEND REPORT TO:

COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

c/o BILL LISOWSKY

2919 SILVERPLUME DR.

FT. COLLINS, CO 80526

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

2000-154

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) LeConte's Sparrow

(Scientific Name) *Ammodramus lecontei*

Recd 2/19/01 wpl

Date(s) of occurrence: 26 February 2000

Number of birds seen: NINE

Exact location: southwest of the large cattail marsh that crosses JJ road south of 16 road.

County: Bent

Nearest town: Ft Lyon

Elevation:

Length of observation: 45 minutes total

Time(s) of observation: 11:00

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Brandon Percival, Marshall Iliff (MD)

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Dave Leatherman first found these birds. Many others saw them as well.

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Clear

Optical equipment used: B & L Elite 10 x 42 binocular

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): 2 – 30 feet

Was bird(s) photographed? Dave Leatherman may have photos.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Birds preferred slightly damp mixed grasses, with relatively open "understory." The habitat was drier than that used by Swamp and Song Sparrows, but damper than where we kicked out Savannah Sparrow.

Description: The birds acted like most *Ammodramus* sparrows when flushed, flying erratically and low over the grasses, usually landing about 50 feet from where flushed and dropping straight down into grasses. At times the sparrows would sit up for a few seconds before landing, but this was unusual. Most birds were only seen in flight. When flushed, the birds were pale and brightly colored.

From here the description is for one of the birds. (I did not notice much difference between any of the birds, aside from slight wear or minor differences in coloration.) Overall small, short-tailed, and short-billed. In flight, the head appeared mostly bright buff, while the mantle was darker with contrasting bright streaks. The rump was bright buff, making the bird overall appear brightly colored (for a sparrow). The tail was short and spiky. When perched, the gray nape with fine rufous-purple streaks was very obvious. A pale light-buff crown stripe contrasted with the bird's dark lateral crown stripe and bright orange-buff supercilium and malar. Auriculars grayish. Breast and flanks buff with dark streaks, fine on breast and thicker but still crisp on flanks. Underparts otherwise pale. Upperparts as described in flight, though rump not visible. I have no notes on the wings, although in flight they were paler and lacked the gray and rufous tones present in Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: Flight style eliminated all but the *Ammodramus* sparrows. Le Conte's Sparrows are easily identified in flight by experienced, competent birders due to their bright buff face and rump and darker mantle with buff streaks. The only possible confusion species are any of the "Sharp-tailed Sparrows." All Sharp-tailed Sparrows are darker without bright buff colored rump with even more apparent differences on sitting birds (median crown stripe). Grasshopper Sparrow lacks the bold stripes on the mantle, and even the brightest of birds lack are not nearly as brightly colored as a LeConte's.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have seen and heard hundreds of LeConte's Sparrows, mostly in the Upper Midwest and North Dakota. I have found two new "wintering" locations for this species in Indiana. I have also seen and heard hundreds of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows and most other sparrows in this genus.

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

This report is from notes made immediately after observation.

Date of written report 3 February 2001

Reporting observer: Christopher L. Wood, zaledonia@att.net

Signature: *Christopher L. Wood (electronic submission)*

Reporting Observer's Address: 3465 S Otis Court

City: Lakewood

State: Colorado

Zip: 80227

