

Species: SPRAGUE'S PIPIT

ANTHUS SPRAGUEII

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): April 28, 1976 Time Bird Seen: 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.

Locality: Estes Park Lake - South side between sedge edge and water.

Nearest Town: Estes Park County: Larimer

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Ruth Peeser

P.O. Box 2075

1-586-3010

Optical Equipment: 8x40 Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Light Conditions: excellent - observation looking north west.

Distance from bird (how measured): 40 ft. (from car)

Number of Birds Seen: 2 Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Plumage: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: Birds were relatively quiet except for occasional walking or running for short distances on the open area between the bank vegetation and the water line. The lake water level has been lowered 3 or 4 feet which provided a limited expanse of mud or sand flats.

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: This observation was during a period when a storm front had enveloped the area and which produced several other unusual species. The following field marks were carefully observed:

Coloration and Markings:

Brown upper parts, discernably streaking on the back, buffy almost yellow upper breast, light striping on side and front of upper breast, one well defined white wing bar, light striping on head, legs were unusually prominent in that they were flesh colored almost to the point of being yellow and long in proportion to the size of the bird. The underparts were light or white except for the buffy-yellow upper breast area.

Build and Bill Conformation:

Size and body build similar to Water Pipit as was the bill, which was thin and not very long. Tail was medium long and dark.

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

None heard - Bird still on ground when we left.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Sandy bar on shore, just beyond<sup>the</sup> shallow water were one Semi-Palmated Plover, 11 Western Sandpipers, and 4 Semi-palmated Sandpipers.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated? Under careful observation there is no bird of similar size and structure that have the Sprague Pipit field marks (walking gait, yellowish legs, type and size of bill, back striping, breast coloration, light throat, and lower body under parts.

At the beginning of this observation, we at first saw only one bird and then the second one dropped out of the sky on what seemed to be an almost vertical pitch.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

One other observation of this species made April 30, 1966 - East of Buckley Field in a prairie grass-land habitat.

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

Checked: Birds of North America; Peterson; Song and Garden Birds (National Geographic). My observation did not find second distinct wing bar and showed upper breast to be more yellowish than references (illustrations) indicate. I could not see outer white tail feathers, though Ruth states she saw a flash of white. This report was written from notes made during            after x observation; from memory           

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when one clicked its tail.