

Please fill out as accurately as possible. Include only those details of which you are certain and only those observed in the field; leave blank details not observed. Attach any additional comments or details on separate sheets. Please print or type

Species Snow Bunting Date(s) 12-31-72
 Location 10.6 miles S. of interchange I-50 & first interchange west of Wiggins
 County Morgan? State Colorado Elevation 4500?
 Observer Van Remsen Number of birds 1
 Time of Day ~ 1100 Light conditions excellent sun at back
 Distance to bird 100-300 feet Optical equipment 10x50 binocs
 Length of time observed ~ 5 minutes
 Sex _____ Plumage (e.g. Breeding) Non-breeding
 Overall appearance and relative size About same size as Horned Larks with which it flocked but bill was conical - obviously a big pale sparrow

Bill Definitely conical, color not observed

Crown and forehead rusty brown

Nape rusty brown

Face brownish area around eye widening into patch behind eye - white between this line and crown and white below this line

Eye dark?

Throat pure white

Breast and sides Rusty-brownish patch on sides of upper breast extending into breast from shoulder - otherwise pure white

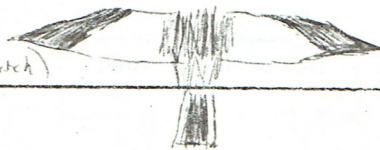
Belly and flanks pure white

Undertail coverts not seen

Back brownish gray with some darker stripes (stripes not conspicuous)

Wings Strikingly black and white patterned in flight - Jet black in primaries and then pure white in secondaries and coverts →
The white wing patch could be seen even when on the ground as a long white stream (similar to Lark Bunting wing patch)

Underwings Not seen



Rump dark (?) maybe light? - can't remember

Uppertail coverts dark (?)

Upperside of tail Very dark or black with pure white outer rectrices contrasting strongly

Underside of tail Not seen

Legs Can't remember

Behavior Jack Reddall spotted this bird in a flock of 100+ Horned Larks as they flushed from a field. The bird definitely associated with the larks and fed from the ground by walking. It also reached upwards, almost hopping into the air, to get seeds from a weed with seed-head. — this behavior not observed in the Horned Larks. It concentrated on this weed for ~ 2 minutes. We approached to within 100 feet before it flushed, getting my second (Jack's fourth) look at the bird in flight

Voice Not heard

Habitat Harvested agricultural field with 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ inches of snow on it. No trees within 1 mile — mostly harvested or dirt agricultural fields

How identification was decided — elimination of similar species

Conical bill eliminated everything but fringillids

Only other fringillids with white wing patches —

(1) Lark Bunting — male is black underneath and has black secondaries, — female is striped underneath, patches not as big

(2) Smith's Longspur — wing patches ~~increase~~ not nearly as conspicuous, underparts buffy

Prior experience with this species I've never seen one in winter plumage but I did see them every day for two months in Alaska. The wing pattern is very familiar to me.

This description written from ☐ notes made during observation
☒ notes made after observation
☒ memory (7 hrs after observation)

Others seeing the bird (addresses of two):

Jack Reddall 4450 S. Alton, Englewood, Colo. 80110

Signed Van Remsen

Date 12-31-72

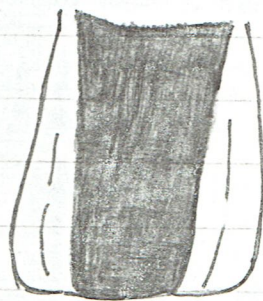
VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN UNUSUAL RECORD

1. Species: SNOW BUNTING Plectrophenax nivalis 2. Number: 1
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)
3. Location: 10.6 miles due south from I-80s interchange one mile west of Wiggins, Morgan Co
4. Date(s): December 31, 1972 5. Time bird seen: 11:00 A.M. to 11:15 A.M.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern. (Describe in great detail all parts of the plumage including beak and feet coloration in addition to the diagnostic characteristics; however, include only what actually was seen in the field):
I first noticed the bird as it flew off over a stubble field with a large flock of Horned Larks. (100+), The large white patches in the wings (coverts and secondaries) contrasting markedly with the dark black primaries. It was easy to pick the bird out as it flew, even in such a large flock of larks. The Snow Bunting came to rest with the rest of the larks in an open stubble field covered with 2"-6" of snow, where we observed (Van Remsen and myself) it feeding on the ground for about 5 or 6 minutes up to 100! The bill was conical in shape unlike the slender, more acute bill of the Horned lark. The bill color was light, whitish. (See attached)
7. Description of voice, if heard:
Silent; at least we were unable to detect a call or note.
8. Description of behavior:
(See attached)
9. Habitat--general: high plains
specific: cultivated wheat stubble field
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated 6, 7 and 8 above; Explain:
a) Smith's Longspur - less conspicuous white wing markings. brownish underpart.
b) Lark Bunting - much more streaking underparts; wing patches less conspicuous.
11. Distance (how measured?): 100 feet to 400 feet (estimated)
12. Optical equipment: 10X 50 Bushnell Binoculars
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer):
Excellent: Bright sun; still air. Light behind observer when bird feeding
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
Seen on numerous occasions in small flocks in winter along the sand dunes and beaches of Long Island, New York.
15. What made you think this species was unusual or rare?
Never saw one in Colorado before (8 years)
16. Other observers:
Van Remsen - 7160 West 9th Place, Denver, Colorado 80215
17. Did others agree with your identification?
Yes.
18. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
19. Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation: None
20. If bird was photographed, please attach pictures and describe equipment used:

Jack Reddall Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street
Signature
Date Prepared: January 6, 1973 City and State: Englewood, Colorado 80110

(USE THE REVERSE, OR ADDITIONAL PAGES, IF NECESSARY)

6. (continued): The forehead, crown and back of head were brownish to brownish rusty. Also noted was rusty patch around the ear area and another rusty patch extending from the shoulder into the breast area. Otherwise the face, throat, breast and remaining underparts were pure white. The eye was dark. The back appeared grayish-brown with diffused dark markings or striping. At rest, there was a conspicuous white stripe area in the otherwise black wing. The upper tail was dark with white outer tail feathers (rectrices). In flight the tail and wing patterns were most striking. It was not possible to determine sex for certain.



8. The Snow Bunting was associating with a large flock of Horned Lark. When the flock was disturbed.

in. At rest we observed it feeding at a small weed stalk, extending itself on its toes (as it were) to obtain the seeds at the top of the stalk. occasionally, it would jump up or flutter up to obtain the seeds. The bird was also observed walking on ground amidst the Horned Larks. We observed the feeding process for approximately two or three minutes.