

## VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN UNUSUAL RECORD

Accepted JR 3/23/74

1. Species: SNOW BUNTING | *Plectrophenax nivalis* 2. Number: one  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

3. Location: A. Ken Caryl Rd., approx. 100 yd E of Garrison B. vic. 6100  
S. Kipling

4. Date(s): A. 03Jan74, B. 07Jan74 5. Time bird seen: attached to *XXX09X*

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):

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: feeding - see 6 - The most noticeable feature was its high activity. Seemingly less affected by the cold than Horned Larks.

9. Habitat--general: Open ground - partially snow covered.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated 6, 7 and 8 above; Explain: Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs were present for comparison.

11. Distance (how measured?): A. 10-20 yds B. 40 yds estimated

12. Optical equipment: 10x40 Leitz binoculars, 20x Swift spotting scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer): see attached sheet

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: No previous experience with this species. Extensive experience with

15. What made you think this species was unusual or rare? Horned Larks  
Mildred Snyder: Rare bird alert. Harold Holt (05Jan74)

16. Other observers:  
A. Wenda McCallum B. none

17. Did others agree with your identification? yes

18. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
See attached sheet

19. Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation: Robbins, et al, *Birds of North America*  
Peterson, *A Field Guide to Western Birds* (1961)  
descriptions and plates correlate highly with my observations

20. If bird was photographed, please attach pictures and describe equipment used:  
not photographed

Signature

Date Prepared: 15Jan74

Street Address: 537 Alpine Avenue (After Feb 1)

City and State: Boulder, Co

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

File No. 56-74-2  
SNOW BUNTING (Plectrophenax nivalis): D. Arch McCallum, observer  
5.A. 1030-1035 B. 0945-1020  
Accepted J.R. 3/23/74

6. A. The bird was feeding along the roadside with a flock of Horned larks (~~Emberiza~~ Eremophila alpestris). Also present was one Lapland Longspur (Calcarius lapponicus) and one Tree Sparrow (Spizella arborea). I was immediately impressed by the roundness and size (larger relative to the body than in the larks) of the head and by the shortness, stoutness, and light color of the bill. I noted the buffy neck ring and generally buffy color of the upperparts. The throat and underparts, except for the ~~f~~ ring, were white, leading me to classify the bird as a male, based on Robbins and other guides. The bird was flushed and flew with the others species a short distance before alighting. I noticed some white in the wings although it did not appear extensive. I did not get a clear view of the bird in flight. The bird appeared about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch shorter than the Horned Larks.

B. I noticed a flock of birds about 40 yds away along a slight ridge in the field west of Kipling (immediately across from the J.J. Gerlits residence). Scanning with 10x40 binoculars I glimpsed among the Horned Larks a bird I supposed to be a Snow Bunting. I moved down the hill about 20yds for a better vantage point and after ten minutes of observing the flock with 20x scope I again spotted the Snow Bunting. Because the birds were on a hill above eye level and because of furrowlike relief of some 3 or 4 inches not all birds were visible at one time. Most Horned Larks were relatively inactive. The Snow Bunting was noticeably more active than any of the Horned Larks. At this point (0955) the entire flock arose, flew ~~me~~, and settled on the frozen surface and dam of a farm pond east of the road. As the flock flew over I noted a bird (presumably Snow Bunting) considerably whiter than the others. I was not able to follow it to its resting place, however. I located the Snow Bunting on a mound beyond the dam and studied it carefully for approximately 20 minutes with 20x scope. It seemed to prefer this mound and seldom strayed far away. It was again noticeably more active than the Horned Larks and on two occasions hopped rather than walking. Although the bird was backlit I was able to see its features in great detail and to my complete satisfaction. I again noted the round head with much white, the very short, stout, light-colored bill, and completely white underparts. The breast ring was buffy and incomplete. The top of the head, facial area, and back were light brown. The basal half of the primaries were white; the terminal half, black. The rest of the wing was buffy or light brown. All markings were distinct and closely matched the illustration of a male in Robbins, except for the wings, which did not show as much white.

13. A. Bright sun. bird sidelight. B. sun visible through very light haze. Bird backlit. Sun approximately 20 degrees right of bird.

18.B. After leaving the area I saw Sue Merrick and told her of the location. She reported later that she had seen it at the exact same location. Later it was not found there but others are reported to have seen it nearby.