

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒ A

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

Species: Snow Bunting

(Vernacular Name)

Plectrophenax nivalis

(Scientific Name)

Date(s): 17 December 1977Number of birds seen: TwoSex: ?Plumage: Non-breedingLocality: Chatfield Reservoir (sailboat launch)Elevation: about 5200 ft.Nearest town: LittletonCounty: Arapahoe-DouglasTime(s) observed: 1530-1600Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) Continuously for 30+ minutes

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

Bill Lybarger-2415 S. Memphis Way, Aurora, Colorado 80013

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

Hugh Kingery-869 Milwaukee, Denver, ColoradoPaul Julian-1260 Chinook Way, Boulder, Colorado 80303

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

Excellent-sun shining on birds from behind observersOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60X Zoom telescopeDistance, and how measured: Minimum estimated distance of 20 ft.

If photographed, type of equipment and film: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else photographed the bird? Bill Lybarger

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Birds were actively feeding on tiny grain seeds gleaned from the sandy ground or the ice, perhaps from low weeds themselves. Always remained together (within 5 ft. of each other). Sometimes were in the open, sometimes hidden among small boulders or low weeds. Flew only when pressed very hard by us, and then no more than 30-40 ft.

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-sized to smallish finches; fairly short, moderately thick orange bills with a very tiny black tip; head mostly white with a rusty-brown median stripe; rusty patch on ear coverts; pale grayish through eyes and lores; nape pale gray; back light gray-brown with blackish streaks; rump rustier than back; incomplete rusty breastband; remainder of underparts white; wings mostly black with large white patch; scapulars distinctly rusty; tail quite short, deeply forked, black with broad white sides; feet black; eye black.

(OVER)



Description, (continued)

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): Occasionally called in flight. A double note like a longspur note, but softer, more musical (structured like a longspur note, but quality more reminiscent of a Tree Sparrow).

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:  
Sandy shoreline (with small rocks, low weeds) of a medium-sized recreation reservoir in mixed suburban-agricultural area.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

No other bird really resembles it. Lark has black head markings, no white on wing, thinner, black bill. Longspurs likewise completely different in most plumage aspects. McKay's Bunting (not a realistic possibility) is much rustier.

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

I have seen Snow Bunting only once previously (24 January 1977-Castle Rock).

I have seen Horned Larks on many occasions, and also longspurs regularly.

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

a) at time of observation: None needed.

b) after observation:

This report was written from notes made during \_\_\_\_\_, after x observation; from memory \_\_\_\_\_.

Date and time report was written: 27 December-1225

Reporting observer: Robert Andrews Signature: Robert Andrews

Address: 1390 So. Ivy Way Denver, Colorado 80224

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below.

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,  
CITY PARK  
DENVER, COLORADO 80205