

Species:

Field Sparrow

(Vernacular Name)

Spizella pusilla

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s):

28 February 1981

Time Bird Seen:

1620

to 1628

Locality:

Highline canal at Highway 85 (KDKO broadcast station)

Nearest Town:

Littleton

County:

Douglas (Arapahoe?)

Other observers who independently identified this bird: NONE

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Optical Equipment:

7x35 wide-angle Bushnell binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Partly Cloudy, low-angle light from side

Distance from bird (how measured): 6-20 m (estimated)

Number of Birds Seen:

One

Sex:

u

Plumage:

Adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: Responded to "spshing" by flying up from ground in patch of shrubs, alighting in shrub and acting agitated. Continued to fly closer until ~6 m away, then flew into cottonwood near a flock of House Finches. Then flew back into shrubbery.

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:

The bird was smaller and slimmer in build, relatively long-tailed, ^{when} compared to nearby finches. The breast was clear and unmarked, light tan to whitish. The back was streaked, the wings had somewhat inconspicuous thin white bars. The auricular region was gray, with no stripes or patches of color evident, and faded into a reddish brown crown. The bird had a conspicuous white eye ring; the bill was horn color to pink (both mandibles - more toward pink than horn).

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc: Weak chip uttered once when first aroused by "spshing".

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Grassland with patches of tall (~1.5m) shrubs interspersed; immediately adjacent to cottonwoods along canal. Shrubs were rabbitbrush, I believe.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated? (The bird was obviously a Spizella sparrow to me)

Tree Sparrow - bicolored mandibles; breast spot, no eye ring

Chipping Sparrow - eye line, black in adult, no eye ring, very reddish cap
cheek patch indistinct eye line, no eye ring in imm.

Clay-colored Sparrow - auricular patch, streaked crown

Brewer's Sparrow - " " " "

Other Sparrows: larger or with streaked breasts, no eye + ring combined w/ clear breast and cheek.
or streaked crowns

♀ House Sparrow: "chunkier", eye line, yellowish bill

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Very familiar with this species and all the others above.

[Field Sparrows were very common in my home state (NJ)]

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

None

This report was written from notes made during (date, time, location) after ✓ observation; from memory ✓ (the rest)

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