

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPER BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

56-91-77

Species: Field Sparrow
(Vernacular name)

Spizella pusilla
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): October 20, 1991 Time Bird Seen: 10:30 AM to 10:40 AM

Locality: Below dam of Lake Beckwith in
Colorado City - Pueblo County - Colorado
Nearest town, county and state: Not listed in Current latilong study in
#26 Trinidad Latilong

Optical equipment: 10x40 Zeiss Binocular

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult

Light conditions: Excellent - Sun was to my back

Distance from bird, and how measured: 25 feet estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

I first observed this bird flying toward me from a shrubby hill side. It landed in a low growing shrub at the edge of a cattail marsh. I followed it up the dam embankment of Lake Beckwith. I found it again near the top of the dam in some low growing shrubs feeding with juncos.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Marshy area below dam of large lake. The bird preferred low growing shrubs near the marsh

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

None

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field. Head was gray except for pale diffuse rufous^{crown} extending into nape, very pale rufous auricular patch slightly more rufous at borders, bold white eyering completely surrounding dark eye. Bill was conical shape and solid pink. Lores were light - no eye line. Back was striped with alternate vertical light & dark lines. Wings and tail were predominately dark brownish gray with slightly more buff near wing bars which were white. The bottom wing bar was more prevalent than top wing bar. Underparts were solid light grayish white becoming slightly darker gray near flanks & undertail coverts.

I did not see leg color well. Size of bird was smaller than White-crowned Sparrow and about same size of Juncos which fed nearby.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

I heard it just once. It gave a lispy "tseep" as it first flew toward me and landed. I could not distinguish this single note from the chip given by other sparrows.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

This bird looked most like a tree Sparrow which has a darker upper mandible; yellowish lower mandible. Tree Sparrows also has stick-pin on chest. Tree Sparrows seem to have more rufous on crown & in auricular patch than the bird I saw. Tree Sparrows also have more buff on flanks which was lacking in bird I saw. Chipping Sparrows have dark lores & eyeline. & lack solid pink bill as do Brewer's Sparrows.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have seen many field sparrows in Kansas & my native state of Missouri. This bird is the 3rd Field Sparrow I've seen in Colorado but the first one in Trinidad Lat/Long #26.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after ☒ observation; from memory _____

NAME (print):

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Signature:

David A. Silverman

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

XC Hugh Kingery