


2003-32

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)
Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

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CBRC FILE #: 2003-32		
RESULTS:		
Species: (Common Name) Sprague's Pipit		(Scientific Name) <i>Anthus spragueii</i>
Date(s) of occurrence: 27 April 2003		
Number of birds seen: 1	Sex: unknown	Plumage: adult, a bit worn
Exact location: along County Road G in southwestern Baca County, near its crossing of Sand Canyon wash		
County: Baca	Nearest town: Campo	Elevation: ?
Length of observation: 3 to 4 minutes		Time(s) of observation: roughly 1300 hrs. MDT
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Brenda D. Smith-Patten, who independently and quickly identified the bird		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): none		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: sun overhead and slightly behind us (we were eastbound)		
Optical equipment used: Bausch and Lomb Elite 10x42 binoculars		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): 8 to 10 m		
Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? no		If so, are you submitting photos? N/A
Who took the photograph(s)? N/A		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: at edge of dirt road in relatively undisturbed shortgrass prairie		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: jerked head slightly when walking; did not pump tail; "parachuted" back to the ground after bursting into flight		
<p>DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. The following is a verbatim account from my notes, written the following morning (photocopy attached); clarifying remarks are in brackets: "The <u>Sprague's Pipit</u> was in shortgrass prairie along CR G ~10 km northeast of the Three Corners Monument. We viewed the bird from our car, both of us getting good looks from out my window [I was driving]. The bird was the size and shape (roughly) of an American Pipit, although it was a little plumper, with a slightly shorter tail. The bill was longish and thin, somewhat warbler-like. The legs and feet were pink. It did not 'pump' its tail as it walked. The plumage was distinctive. The dark eye was prominent in the unmarked face. The crown and nape were streaked finely with black, though the streaks widened from the forehead to the nape [mostly on the latter]. The throat was slightly whiter than the face or breast. The breast and belly were warm buff, the breast overlain with a band of black streaks; the breast streaks were short and fine. The flanks were buff, the belly and the undertail coverts whitish. The mantle and scapulars black with buff-white edges, creating a pattern somewhere between scaling and streaking [though decidedly more like the later, as the bird's plumage was a bit worn; also the bird had two dull wingbars]. When the bird jumped into flight it showed ~3 [probably 2!] clean white feathers on either side of the tail. It shot upward at a steep angle, then 'parachuted' back to earth quickly, hiding in dense grass."</p>		
Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: not heard (though I think it did call)		
<p>SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration: pink legs and plumage pattern eliminated American Pipit (<i>A. rubescens</i>) easily; bill size and shape, behavior, overall plumage details (distinctly streaked crown and nape; back pattern; fine breast streaking), lack of white spotting above, etc., eliminated a juvenile Horned Lark (<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>)</p>		
What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have seen many juvenile Horned Larks. I have previously seen about 30 Sprague's Pipit, a dozen of them in California (where I found two that were photographed and seen by others), a number of them in Arizona, a few in North Dakota, and stunning views of one—which was basically identical in appearance to the Colorado bird—at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in north-central Oklahoma on 13 April 2003.		
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): none		
This report was made from (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> notes made during observation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> notes made after observation <input type="checkbox"/> later from memory.		
Date and time of written report: 16 May 2003		
Reporting observer: Michael A. Patten		Signature: 
Reporting observer's address: Sutton Avian Research Center, University of Oklahoma, P.O. Box 2007		
City: Bartlesville	State: Oklahoma	Zip: 74005
<p align="center">Send report to: Colorado Bird Records Committee Tony Leukering, PO Box 660, Brighton, CO 80601</p>		