

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

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

Species: Sprague's Pipit | Anthus spragueii
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): September 30, 1989Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Unknown Plumage: I think this may have been a 1st year birdLocality: Northeasternmost Colo 15 mi. E RD 500 Elevation: 3700' ±Nearest town: 8 1/2 miles ESE of Julesburg RD 500 County: SedgwickTime(s) observed: 4 1/2 miles SW of NE corner of Colorado 7 PMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 10 minutes - then again on S. side of road 1/2 mile.

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

None

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

None

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

Clear, hot, sunny day - Temperature 80°+ Sun to the west - I was looking SW.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 8x binoculars and 20x telescopeDistance, and how measured: 40 - 70 feet - estimatedIf photographed, type of equipment and film: NoWho else photographed the bird?

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

This bird was feeding on the ground in low, green grass, but flew out on plowed field then after I observed it 10 minutes I forced it to fly. The flight was undulating and irregular like a Longspur. The back to the grass

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 observe in the field:

Sparrow size, but ~~not as plump~~ not as plump. When it flew out into the plowed field its long, pink legs just glistened in the sun. The head seemed small to me, and the black eyes very large in proportion to the head size. The eye-ring was so small that it was scarcely noticeable on the pale, light brown face. The bill was long and slim, and open almost all the time. The bird was in the plowed field because it was panting with heat.

Description (continued):

The back was medium brown with darker edging which gave a scaly appearance (as shown in National Geographic). The top of the back was not streaked as shown in the Golden Guide. The top of the tail on the tips of the wings were black. I did not see the rump exposed which is supposedly streaked. The bird was very much aware of my presence at all times and never did turn toward me so I could see the breast. When it flew the outer tail feathers were not nearly as obvious as a Vesper Sparrow's.

This find culminates 3 years of searching + planning. Jerry Carr and I looked in this area on Oct 25, 1986 - but decided we were too late. I visited Scott Seltman in Nekoma, Kansas to see the bird on April 22, 1988 in long-grass prairie. I looked here on Oct 3, 1988 and thought I was a bit late. Scott Seltman deserves a lot of credit for this discovery. Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

No sound on the ground - A few chips when I forced it to fly.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Flat, open farmland. The bird was feeding in low green grass at the edge of a plowed and neatly harrowed field. I scared it into the plowed field. How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? Then it returned to the grass.

Water Pipits have black legs and wag their tails. This bird had pink legs and did not wag its tail. Vesper Sparrows are darker overall, have a dark eye patch, and a much more prominent eye-ring, and a shorter, shubbier bill. All Longspurs have a much shubbier bill. None have pink legs.

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

I studied this bird in its nesting area at Lostwood WMA in North Dakota and saw it again in Nekoma (central) Kansas with Scott Seltman.

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

a) at time of observation: None But I studied National Geographic at 10 AM because this trip was primarily designed to find a Sprague's Pipit.

b) after observation: National Geographic N.A. Birds - excellent illustration Golden Guide - This is probably the Golden Guide's worst mistake. The Sprague's Pipit is not streaked on the back.

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation _____ from memory X

Date and time report was written: October 1, 1989 7 PM

Reporting observer: L.W. Dan Bridges Signature: L.W. Dan Bridges

Address: 1925 S. Vaughn Way #207 Aurora Co. 80014

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, CO 80205

SPECIES: SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
(Vernacular Name)

46-89-35 A
ANTHUS SPRAGUEII
(Scientific Name)

DATE(S): 10-8-1989 TIME OF OBSERVATION: 10:13 TO 10:38

EXACT LOCATION: 6.9 MILES EAST OF HIGHWAY 385 ALONG COUNTY RD 30

NEAREST TOWN: JULESBURG COUNTY: SEDGWICK

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

DAVE LEATHERMAN, DICK SCHOTTLER, WARREN FINCH, DAN BRIDGES,
THOMPSON MARSH, DUANE NELSON, DAVID MARTIN ET AL.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: BUSHNELL 7X35 BINOCULARS, BUSHNELL "SPACEMASTER" SCOPE - 40X LENS

WEATHER CONDITIONS: CLEAR, SUNNY, SLIGHT BREEZE, 70'S

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: BIRD IN FRONT OF OBSERVER, SUN BEHIND AND APPROX 20° TO RIGHT

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: APPROXIMATED AT 75 FEET

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 2 SEX: — PLUMAGE: —

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: THE BIRDS FLEW UP FROM A LOW GRASSY STRIP BORDERING
A PLOWED FIELD AND LANDED IN THE BARE PLOWED FIELD. THEY WOULD STRETCH THEIR
NECKS UPWARD EVERY FEW SECONDS WHEN THEY WENT BACK INTO THE GRASS. IN THE
PLOWED FIELD, THEY WOULD TAKE A FEW STEPS THEN STOP, MOSTLY FACING AWAY,
BUT SEVERAL TIMES FACING OBSERVER. NO TAIL PUMPING AT ANY TIME. NO
HURRIED WALKING. THEY WALKED MORE UPRIGHT THAN HORNED LARKS.

HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.):

SOMEWHAT DARK FOREHEAD, FINE DARK STREAKING ACROSS CROWN AND DOWN
BACK OF HEAD TO NAPE, PALE FACE WITH NO STRONG MARKINGS AT EAR
THROAT VERY PALE WITH NO MARKINGS, A CONTINUATION OF FACE COLOR EXCEPT LIGHT

EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): VERY PROMINENT
DARK EYES WITH PALE LORES, SAME COLOR AS FACE. BIRDS HAD A
SURPRISED LOOK DUE TO PROMINENT EYES

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): BILL CONGISH AND THIN, NOT AS THIN
AND POINTED AS A WARBLER. UPPER MANDIBLE DARK, LOWER MOSTLY ~~GREEN~~ ORANGISH
LEGS & FEET: BRIGHT PINK ON ONE INDIVIDUAL, PINKISH-ORANGE ON THE OTHER

UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): NAPE SOMEWHAT PALE WITH
EXTENSION OF NECK SPEAKS; BACK SCALY WITH PALE EDGES TO FEATHERS;
RUMP APPEARED TO BE LIGHTER THAN BACK

UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): CHIN AND THROAT
PALE WITH NO STRIPES, SLIGHTLY LIGHTER THAN FACE. BREAST BUFFY WITH
FAINT VERTICAL STREAKS, JOINED IN THE CENTER ON ONE BIRD AND A
SMALL GAP IN THE CENTER ON OTHER BIRD. BELLY WHITISH AND SLIGHT
PAN COLOR TO FLANKS

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):
OUTER 2 TAIL FEATHERS WHITISH WITH VERY DARK CENTRAL TAIL
FEATHERS. TAIL LOOKED NARROW AND POINTED ON RESTING BIRD
AND STILL SOMEWHAT NARROW IN FLIGHT
WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): BROWNISH WITH WHITE
EDGES TO WING COVERTS, GIVE SOMEWHAT A SPOTTED LOOK. DID NOT
NOTICE WING BARS

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):
EACH BIRD GAVE ONE SQUEAK CALL AS IT FLEWED FROM PLOWED
FIELD

HABITAT: SHORT GRASSY STRIP 6" TO 10" TALL BORDERING BETWEEN PLOWED
FIELD AND FIELD OF TALLER WEEDS. BIRDS DID NOT GO INTO TALLER WEEDS

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:
HORNED LARKS AND LONGSPURS DID NOT HAVE BRIGHT PINK LEGS AND FEET.
SPARROWS HAD PALE LEGS AND SHORTER THICKER BILLS. JUVENILE HORNED
LARKS HAD DARKER FACES AND MORE UNIFORM COLORING ON UPPERPARTS.
LONGSPURS HAD MORE UNIFORM BROWN COLOR WITH DARKER UNDERPARTS AND FACES.
OTHER BIRDS WITH PINK LEGS, SUCH AS THRUSHES AND SOME WARBLERS WERE
ELIMINATE BECAUSE OF COLOR (THRUSHES DARKER AND MORE UNIFORM
COLOR) AND SIZE (WARBLERS MUCH SMALLER). NORTHERN WATER THRUSH
RULED OUT BECAUSE OF DARKER COLOR AND DISTINCT EYE-BROW

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPRAGUES PIPIT. EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE
WITH HORNED LARKS, PLAINS SPARROWS, WATER PIPITS, THRUSHES,
WARBLERS.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD-GUIDE, AUDUBONS MASTER SERIES GUIDE BOOK

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING AFTER OBSERVATION; FROM MEMORY
NAME: JOSEPH MAMMOSEK SIGNATURE: Joseph Mammoser DATE: 10-9-89

