

2002-116

From: antejos@juno.com
 Sent: Saturday, December 21, 2002 1:47 PM
 To: GreatGrayOwl@aol.com
 Subject: LeConte's Sparrow(s)

Ⓐ Accepted

Read it and weep. Billy Bob, Birdwatcher.

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form		
(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)		
<i>Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!</i>		
CBRC FILE #:		
RESULTS:		
Species: (Common Name) LeConte's Sparrow		(Scientific Name) Ammodramus lecontei
Date(s) of occurrence: December 20, 2002		
Number of birds seen: 4 seen, 2 additional heard	Sex: unknown	Plumage: unknown
Exact location: marsh edge of John Martin Reservoir, adjacent to Rd. HH near and northeast of "Black-t Green Grove"		
County: Not sure	Nearest town: Ft. Lyons	Elevation: dunno
Length of observation: 1 bird perched 1min. 30 seconds. Others perched ~10- 25 seconds		Time(s) of observation: mid-morning
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Brandon Percival and Mark Peterson for 4 birds. Duane & Gene Rutherford for 1 additional bird		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): many		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position: worked into excellent light sun near my back		
Optical equipment used: originally Zeiss 10x GBTbinoculars. Later through Leica APO Televid scope		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): closest distance ~20 feet		
Was (were) bird(s) photographed? One bird photographed		If so, are you submitting photos? yes
Who took the photograph(s)? Me, William, Billy Bob, Maynard		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: large marsh on the northwest end John Martin Reservoir, drying but with thin layer of ice in cattails. I believe that the species composition deeper part of the marsh to be a monotypic stand of narrow-leaved cattail. The upland areas with some were composed of Carex sedges, some Spartina grass, and short dead Plain's Cottonwoods of shrub height trees of 1-2" diameters and 3-7' tall used sometimes as perches by the sparrows.		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification: flying, feeding, habits:		
DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size of the bird, how you placed the bird in the general group that you did, and give as many plumage details possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Features include are the color(s) and/or patterns of the head, eyes, bill, back, folded wings, open wings, tail, chin,		

breast, sides, flanks, belly, vent, and legs. Also, please include, where possible, shape of the whole bird, wings – folded or open, of the bill, and of the tail. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report. We welcome attachments of additional sheets of description, drawings, field sketches, or other field notes.

Characteristic flat head and short spiky tail of the genus *Ammadromous*. Weak flight often spreading and plopping without grace into a grass or sedge tussock. Very short low flights only a few feet above marsh vegetation. White lines on back visible in flight as was orange upper breast and face. Contrasty white r. lines on back visible when perched. When perched, median crown stripe whitish but grading towards or approaching the frontal crown of the bird. Striking orangish supercillium with striking contracting gray rhombus directly below and behind eye. Post-ocular dark arrow pointing towards eye. Rich orange was below eye extending down on to breast. Delicate dark streaking on breast and on flanks extending all of to the rear flanks. Belly dingy whitish. Legs and feet pink. Eye dark with conspicuous light eyering. B. flesh tones appearing grayish from the sides with darker gray on ridge of maxillae.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: thin "seep" call notes especially when I approach within 10 feet of a bird.

SIMILAR SPECIES – This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration: The only other species that have this morphology and coloration are other members of the same genus, *Ammodramus* and which include Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and the Saltmarsh Sparrows. Eliminate Grasshopper Sparrow which does not have dark streaks on its rear flanks and breast. Eliminate Henslow's which would show the characteristic olive nape and olive supercilium. Eliminate the 2 Sharp-tailed Sparrows that both have a bluish gray median crown stripe, not whitish one with orange on the frontal portion of it..

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? Not much. 1st seen in Texas from a buggy. Then seen 2 other times in Colorado, near this site.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (done after observation):

This report was made from (check one) ☒ notes made during observation ☐ notes made after observation later from memory.

Date and time of written report: December 21, 2002

Reporting observer: William Maynard

Signature: xxx

Reporting observer's address: 18645 Wethersfield Dr.

City: Monument

State:

Zip: 80132

Colorado

Send report to:

Colorado Bird Records Committee

Tony Leukering

PO Box 660

Brighton, CO 80601

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Photo by

Bill Maynard

