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2003-82

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

CBRC FILE #:		
RESULTS:		
Species: (Common Name) Smith's Longspur		(Scientific Name) <i>Calcarius pictus</i>
Date(s) of occurrence: 11 Oct 03		
Number of birds seen: 1	Sex: ?	Plumage: 1 st or definitive basic
Exact location: S. Side of Neenoshe Reservoir From Duane Nelson: "On the south side of the lake, there is a county road (the northernmost of the two roads signed as "D" Road!). Go east past the boat ramp, curving along the contour of the groves of trees lining the road. At the outhouse where a county road comes in from the south, turn left (north) toward the lake. Follow the 2-track, taking the left fork. You should see the remnants of a very weedy island, with a barren strip of alkali-encrusted substrate separating the mainland from the former island. The barren ground in the former channel is what you are looking for."		
County: Kiowa	Nearest town: Lamar	Elevation: ~3700'
Length of observation: About 15 minutes. The length of observation was sufficient to check several field guides, re-look at the bird, check the guides again, re-check the bird again, etc. The length of observation was also sufficient to compare the bird's flight calls with recordings on my MP3 player while still in the field observing the bird, and then to hear the bird call again several times.		Time(s) of observation: About 2:15 pm
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Brandon Percival, Rachel Hopper, Duane Nelson, Dave Silverman, Gene Rutherford, Joe Mammoser, Steve Mammoser		
Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Glen Walbek		
Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position): Sunny light but some heat wave problems.		
Optical equipment used: Kowa TSN 824 + 32X WA		
Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): About 50 meters		
Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? Yes		If so, are you submitting photos? No
Who took the photograph(s)? Glen Walbek got photos of what I believe <i>could</i> be the same bird the next day. His photos looked quite distorted from heat waves, however, so I'm not 100% sure it's the same bird.		
Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: The bird was in a bare alkaline flat formed in a low swale of the drought-lowered irrigation reservoir.		
Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits: The bird was associating with a flock of Horned Larks and some Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs. The bird mainly stayed on the ground, apparently foraging for wind-blown seeds or insects on the alkaline flat. When resting the bird adopted the low-profile wind-breaking posture common to longspurs. A few times it was startled into short wheeling flights by flying Horned Larks, giving numerous flight calls each time. Eventually it flew to another part of the lake and wasn't re-found that day.		
DESCRIPTION - A ground-loving buffy brownish sparrow-like bird. Facial pattern, especially dark auricular frame, typical of longspurs. Pale (but not white) supercillium and malar were the most contrasting features on the face apart from the dark auricular frame. Throat also appeared to be pale. Bill dull pink, a bit longer but more importantly more pointed-looking and less robust than nearby Chestnut-collared Longspurs.		
The back of the bird had buffy/dark brown lengthwise striping.		
Two thin but well defined, brightly contrasting white wing bars were visible on the bird. Otherwise the wings were mostly brown with dark striping. Very importantly, however, the primaries were black and had relatively long primary projection. We studied this point at length, comparing the primary projection to field guide illustrations and with nearby Chestnut-collared Longspurs and returning to the bird in question. In particular, David Sibley's close-up sketches of the 4 longspur species' primary projections proved to be extremely helpful, and the bird definitely had the long primary projection shown by Smith's and Lapland Longspurs. The length of the tail remaining beyond the primaries was about the length of the primary projection. We couldn't see well enough to get a wing formula, but other points discussed below support Smith's Longspur, not Lapland.		
The underparts of the bird were buffy, noticeably more colorful and warm than any of the CCLO, MCLO, or HOLA nearby. The buffy coloration continued down through the vent area to the undertail coverts. This was visible even to the bare eye, making the bird easy to pick out from the much paler, dull looking birds around it. Scope-views provided a look at slightly darker, diffuse long thin streaking on the upper breast and a little bit on the flanks.		
The tail looked mostly dark when folded, but in flight straight white outer stripes were visible. Our group remarked at the time that the white outer tail feather proportions reminded us of a Dark-eyed Junco's tail.		

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted: The bird gave rattling call notes as it flew around several times. The call notes were heard in the presence of other longspur rattles, including Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs. The call was nearly always 4 or 5 syllables, very well defined, and quite loud and "clean." As mentioned above, the bird was around long enough for us to listen to the recorded flight calls of Smith's Longspurs (both Cornell's Bird Songs of the Rocky Mountain States & Provinces and Flight Calls of Migratory Birds (Eastern North American Landbirds) CD by William Evans and Michael O'Brien) in the field for direct comparison and we found the match to be excellent.

SIMILAR SPECIES – The facial pattern, ground-loving habit, association with Horned Larks, and "rattle" flight call pointed towards the longspurs. As mentioned above, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs were also around, providing good visual and audible comparison. This bird leapt out as being much warmer toned than any other birds in the mixed flock. Duane Nelson described the bird as "Glowing". Although we mainly heard McCown's Longspurs instead of seeing them, distinct white wing bars wouldn't be expected. Also, a rufous wing bar would be expected on at least the adult birds, but we didn't see any rufous wing bars in the bird. Also, the McCown's Longspurs that we heard gave a softer, more musical, bubbly rattle. Chestnut-collared Longspurs nearby looked very pale and dull, fading into the alkali with little contrast. While wing bars were visible on at least some of the Chestnut-collared Longspurs, they weren't as brightly contrasted against the wing, especially the lower wing bar. Additionally, Chestnut-collared Longspurs were frequently heard giving flight notes that seemed much weaker and squeakier, almost rodent-like. Both Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs showed a lot more white in their tails during flight, in more wedge-shaped patches than this bird's nearly parallel outer white tail markings. The other point that bears repeating is that this longspur had long primary projection, which neither McCown's or Chestnut-collared Longspurs show.

Lapland Longspurs share the long primary projection trait, but have several differences with this bird. First of all, their rattle isn't as cleanly defined, with syllables a bit fainter, much closer together and usually in longer phrases. Also, Lapland Longspur shows a broad rufous wing patch in all plumages, which this bird lacked. The bill on Lapland Longspurs is shorter and thicker in appearance, and the buffy breast gives way to a pale belly and vent. Finally, the white in the outer tail of Lapland Longspurs is much less developed than in the bird we saw.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?. This was a life bird for me. I've heard the other North American longspur rattles on many occasions.

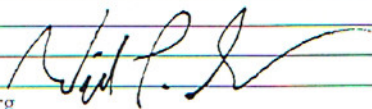
List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation): The Sibley Guide to Birds, National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Cornell's Bird Songs of the Rocky Mountain States & Provinces, Flight Calls of Migratory Birds (Eastern North American Landbirds) by William Evans and Michael O'Brien, and "Learning to Identify Difficult Longspurs" by Sullivan & Kershner (*Birding* Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 508-514.)

This report was made from: Notes made during and after observation.

Date and time of written report: 25 Jan 03

Reporting observer: William P Schmoker

Signature:



Reporting observer's address: 3381 Larkspur Dr. Longmont, CO 80503 email: bill@schmoker.org

2003-82

rec'd
11/12/03SPECIES: SMITH'S LONGSPUR | Calcarius pictus
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)DATE(S): 11 OCT. 03 TIME OF OBSERVATION: 2:15 TO 2:30EXACT LOCATION: NEE NOSHER LK.NEAREST TOWN: WILAY COUNTY: KIOWAOTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:
JOE MAMMOSER, BILL SMOKER, DWAYNE NELSON, BRANDON PAR-
CIVAL, RACHEL HOPPER, DAVE SILVERMAN, GENE RUTHERFORD.OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: SWIFT 8.5x42 BINO'S, BUSHNELL SPACEMASTER SCOPEWEATHER CONDITIONS: SUNNY, WARM, BREEZYBIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: BIRD IN FRONT ON BEACH / SUN BEHIND AND LEFT.DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 40 YARDS, APPROXIMATENUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: ONE SEX: _____ PLUMAGE: WINTERBEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: FEEDING ON BEACH AT TIMES JUST SITTING
IN A SMALL DEPRESSION AND OBSERVING ITS SURROUNDINGS.
WHEN ACTIVELY MOVING BIRD WAS SEEN FROM SEVERAL ANGLES.HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.):
PALE COLOR TO HEAD, DISTINCT AURICULAR PATCH WITH PALE
CENTEREYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): DARK EYES,
PALE EYE RING, DISTINCT PALE SUPERCILIUMLOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): SMALL THIN PALE COLORED
BILLLEGS & FEET: DARK COLOR IN LEGS AND FEETUPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): PALE COLORED
NAPE AND BACK WERE OBSERVED, PALE EDGES IN TERTIALS
WERE EVIDENT, DARK COLOR WAS OBSERVED IN FEATHERS
AT BASE OF TAILUNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.):
PALE COLORING IN THE THROAT AREA, BUFF COLOR EXTEND-
ING THROUGHOUT BREAST, FLANKS, UNDERPARTS TO UNDER-
TAIL COVERTS, FINE STREAKING IN BREAST.

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):

WHEN BIRD FLEW IT WAS OBSERVED THAT THE TAIL AREA ON THE BIRD WAS JUNCO LIKE.

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): PALE COLORED ~~EDGES~~ ~~EDGES~~

IN WINGS, WINGS EXTENDED WELL PAST BASE OF TAIL, PURE WHITE WING BARS WERE DISTINCT.

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):

WARBLING RATTLE WAS GIVEN IN FLIGHT

HABITAT: BARE SANDY LAKE SHORE WITH SOME SHORT WEEDY VEGETATION

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

OBSERVATIONS OF M'COWN'S LONGSPUR ON THE SAME TRIP WITH HEAVY BILL, WHITE UNDERPARTS ELIMINATE IT.

OVERALL PALE GRAYISH COLOR, SHORT WING EXTENSION, AND THE EXTENSIVE WHITE TAIL DID NOT FIT THIS BIRD, AS WOULD BE SEEN IN CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THIS WAS MY FIRST SIGHTING OF SMITH'S LONGSPUR

MY EXPERIENCE WITH LAPLAND LONGSPURS IS MINIMAL WITH WINTER PLUMAGED BIRDS.

MY OBSERVATIONS OF M'COWN'S & CHESTNUT COLLARED LONGSPURS TO DATE ARE OF SPRING BIRDS.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

SIBLY FIELD GUIDE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE IV

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING ☒ AFTER ☒ OBSERVATION; ☒ FROM MEMORY

NAME: STEVE MANMOSER SIGNATURE:  DATE: 10-19-03

red'd 3/15/04

SPECIES: SMITHS LONGSAUR
(Vernacular Name)

CALLCARIUS PICTUS
(Scientific Name)

DATE(S): 10-11-03

TIME OF OBSERVATION: 2:15pm TO 2:25pm

EXACT LOCATION: NEE NOSHE RESERVOIR, SOUTH-EAST CORNER

NEAREST TOWN: WILEY

COUNTY: KIOWA

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

DUANE NELSON, BILL SHMOKER, BRANDON PERCIVAL, DAVE SILVERMAN,
RACHEL HOPPER, STEVE MAMMOSE

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: BAUSCH & LOMB 10X42 ELITE BINS, KOWA TSN-824 SCOPE

WEATHER CONDITIONS: PARTIALLY SUNNY WITH HIGH HAZY CLOUDS

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: BIRD IN FRONT, SUN BEHIND AND TO THE LEFT

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: APPROXIMATED AT 75-80 FEET

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: F? PLUMAGE: WINTER

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: THE BIRD FORAGED ON THE GROUND IN AN AREA WHERE
THE CAKE BED HAD DRIED. IT CROUCHED IN A SMALL DEPRESSION, PICKING
SEEDS FROM THE BOTTOM AND THEN WOULD WALK TO ANOTHER SPOT
TO FORAGE. AS IT DID THIS, WE GOT GOOD LOOKS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
WHEN IT FACED US, WE COULD SEE THE BUFFY UNDERPARTS. WHEN IT
FACED AWAY, WE COULD NOT MAKE OUT VERY MUCH WHITE IN THE TAIL.

HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.):
THE CROWN WAS STREAKED DARK BROWNISH BLACK ON A TAN BACKGROUND.
THE AURICULAR AREA WAS BORDERED BY A DARK BROWN TRIANGULAR PATCH
SURROUNDED BY BUFF. THE TRIANGULAR PATCH WAS SOMEWHAT THIN ALONG THE REAR
EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): EYES DARK;
THERE WAS A TANNISH SUPERCILUM ABOVE THE EYE THAT JOINED WITH
A TANNISH STREAKED NAPE

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): THE BILL APPEARED TO BE BROWNISH
WITH A DARKER TIP AND LOOKED SOMEWHAT THIN COMPARED TO MCCOWNS

LEGS & FEET: DARKISH GRAYISH-BROWN

UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): DARK BROWN STREAKED
WITH PALER BROWN/BUFF TIPS

UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): THE UNDERPARTS
WERE PALE BUFF FROM THROAT TO VENT WITH FAINT STREAKING ON SIDES OF
BREAST TO FLANKS. THERE WAS NO WHITE WHATSOEVER UNDERNEATH ON
THIS BIRD

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):
TAIL WAS QUITE DARK. THERE WAS NO CLEAR WHITE ON THE SIDES OF
THE TAIL ON THE STANDING BIRD. DUANE REMARKED THAT AS THE BIRD FLEW,
THE TAIL WAS REMINISCENT OF A JUNCO TAIL. I DID NOT SEE THE BIRD IN FLIGHT.

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): THE WINGS WERE DARKISH
BROWN, ROUGHLY THE SAME COLOR AS THE BACK, WITH TWO DISTINCT
WHITE (NOT BUFF OR WHITISH-BUFF) WING BARS. THE WINGS EXTENDED
PAST THE BASE OF THE TAIL.

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):
WE HEARD ONE DRY TICKING RATTLE CALL AS THE BIRD FLEW WITH OTHER
LONGSPURS AND HORNED LARKS.

HABITAT: DRIED LAKE BED INTERSPERSED WITH GRASSES AND TALLER WEEDS

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THE SMALLER BILL AND WHITE WING BAR TENDS TO RULE OUT McCOWN'S
LONGSPUR. THE PALE^{BUFF} UNDERPARTS WITH NO SIGNIFICANT STREAKING
TENDS TO RULE OUT LAPLAND LONGSPUR (PALE BUFF UNDERPARTS ALSO
TENDS TO RULE OUT McCOWN'S LONGSPUR). WHITE WING BAR AND PALE
BUFF UNDERPARTS TENDS TO RULE OUT CHESTNUT COLLARED LONGSPUR.
COMPLETE WHITE OUTER TAIL FEATHERS WITH DARK CENTRAL FEATHERS
TENDS TO RULE OUT McCOWN'S AND CHESTNUT COLLARED LONGSPURS.
COMPLETE WHITE OUTER TAIL FEATHERS ALSO RULES OUT LAPLAND
LONGSPUR WHICH NORMALLY HAS DARK INNER WEBS TO THE OUTER TAIL.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

I HAVE EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE WITH McCOWN'S AND CHESTNUT
COLLARED LONGSPURS. I HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH LAPLAND LONGSPUR
IN WINTER. I HAVE SEEN A COUPLE OF DOZEN SMITH'S LONGSPURS IN
WINTER IN OKLAHOMA.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
SPARROWS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING ☒ AFTER ☒ OBSERVATION; ☐ FROM MEMORY

NAME: JOE MAMMOSER SIGNATURE: Joe Mammoser DATE: 10/15/03

From: Glenn Walbek [gwalbek@mindspring.com]

Sent: Sunday, October 12, 2003 10:16 PM

To: Bill Schmoker; Tony Leukering; 'Scott & Diane Seltman'; Rachel Hopper; Gregg Goodrich; Chris Wood; Brandon K Percival; Joey Kellner

Subject: Colorado Longspurs

Sorry to jam up your inbox!

These photos were taken today October 12th, at Nee No Shee Reservoir, Kiowa County Colorado. The photos may not appear in correct order in the context of this mail message. Note the photo names.

Longspur1 is a bird that Gregg Goodrich and I felt looked consistent with Smith's (prior to photo examination) based on the overall buffiness and the distinct wingbars. The wingtip projection is not apparent in these photos and was not discernable from our observations. The bird appeared noticeably darker (buffier) overall than other McCown's and Chestnut Collared we observed. Notice the crown on this individual (longspur1-3) shows finely streaked with no noticable median stripe.

Longspur2 shows what appears to be a buffy looking longspur with somewhat pale wing bars. This individual shows a very similar face pattern as longspur1 but does not appear AS buffy below. The bird shows what appears to be a "short" primary projection (longspur2-3) and also shows a white median crown stripe (longspur2-2) and no distinct streaking.

I can not say if either of these birds is the individual observed by qualified birders on Oct 11. We did not hear anything sounding like Smith's.

Glenn

2003-82

Glenn Walbek Longspur 1 Photos



2003-82 Glenn Walbek Longspur 2 Photos

