

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

1-1975
1975-01Common Name: Le Conte's Sparrow Scientific Name: Ammodramus leconteii

Date: 20 Dec 1975 Time: early afternoon Length of time observed: 20-30 sec

Number: 1 Age: adult Sex: unknown

Location: Bear River National Wildlife Refuge

Latilong: Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: 10 m Light conditions: overcast

Optical equipment: 10x40 binoculars

Weather: foggy, cold, drizzly day

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

This bird was bright spot on an otherwise dull Christmas Bird Count. The fog was so bad that we could not see ducks on water from dikes, but could only hear them calling in fog.

While walking the dikes, I had a sparrow[♂] come up from a patch of cattails in reaction to "psssh". The bird perched on a dead ~~to~~ cattail and we had ^{ample} ~~adeq~~ time to observe the central light crown stripe, the bright orange ~~eye~~ superciliary line, and the buffy breast and flank marks. Also, we noted sharp-tail.

Both of us immediately recognized the bird as a LeConte's Sparrow.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: I don't remember

Behavior: Perched on dead cattail for about 30'. Dove back into cattails and did not reappear.

Habitat: cattail marsh

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

Sharp-tail Sparrow - light ~~to~~ central stripe eliminated this
Grasshopper Sparrow - pattern and head color eliminated this

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

Both observers were familiar with LeComte's Sparrow.
I had seen them often in ARKANSAS.


Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Robbins et al.

Significance of record in this area or the state: One of few records for Utah. We submitted a description with BKNWR Christmas Count Report, which apparently has been lost. At the time, I thought of writing a note on increase of wintering LeComte's Sparrows
Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available) in western United States, but thought the numbers of sightings were too few.

Description from notes taken at time of sighting _____ notes made later _____ from memory

Observer: Kimberly Smith

Signature: 

Address: Dept. of Zoology
University of ARKANSAS
Fayetteville AR 72701

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Steve Hoffman

Date prepared: 17 March 1986

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Commemorative Year, 1981-82

Department of Zoology

6 February 1986

Dear Ella:

I have just finished reading my new copy of Utah Birds: A Revised Checklist and I have two more sightings that your committee may be interested in.

Sabine's Gull - 26 September 1977 - Bear River Wildlife Refuge - Amer. Birds 32: 238. I have the photographs of these birds mentioned in the Amer. Birds report. Can I deposit them with your committee?

Le Conte's Sparrow - 20 December 1975 - Bear River Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count - Amer. Birds 30: 553. I note that in your book you state that the sightings of this species are "undocumented". Steve Hoffman and I observed an adult Le Conte's Sparrow on the Christmas Bird Count mentioned above. The bird was seen at about 20 feet along a dike on the refuge. The bird perched on a cattail for about 15-20 seconds, allowing us to note most of the field marks: orangish superciliary stripe, light central crown stripe, stubby tail, buffy breast, and streaked flanks. We submitted our original description of the sighting with the count results. Both of us were previously familiar with the species. I would be happy to make a more detailed report to your committee if you think it is necessary.

Best wishes,

Kim Smith

Kimberly G. Smith
Assistant Professor of Zoology