

5-1987

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VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Lark Bunting

Scientific Name: *Calamospiza melanocorys*

Date: 8/23/87

Time: 1 p.m.

Length of time observed: 15 minutes

Number: 1

Age: adult?

Sex: male?

Location: along road which runs south of the Nephi dump

Lat/long: 11

Elevation (if known): 4500 - about

Distance to bird: 20 feet - closest

Light conditions: direct sun - clear skies

Optical equipment: binoculars and spotting scope

Weather: clear - hot

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

Note: a copy of my notes, taken as I watched the bird the bird, are attached. This is an expanded version.

We were picking through a flock of lark sparrows when I noticed a slightly larger, darker bird. When it flew to a nearby bush, I noticed a semi-circle of white on its shoulders. Having never seen a lark bunting before, I knew this was different. I wasn't sure what it was, however.

At first it appeared to have a peaked head. This may have been the wind. It wasn't a top notch, just a slight point at the back of the head. It was brownish overall with a faint whitish eye ring. The breast was speckled black and white.

I noticed an orange tint in the lower part of the folded wing. My partner felt it was pale tan. ~~It was a very faint orange/tan~~ This orange/tan color ran along the bottom of the secondaries and primaries and seemed to edge most of the feathers in the primary.

~~My partner felt it was pale tan.~~ The upper shoulder (lesser and median wing coverts?) were jet black and the area below (greater wing coverts?) were white. The secondaries and primaries didn't appear as black because of the thin edging of orange/tan.

It had long legs, a large, finch-like blue-gray beak, brown back, darker throat, pale belly, dark undertail coverts.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: not certain

Behavior: on ground and atop fence posts and low wires. Seemed to run across ground more than hop.

Habitat: alkali desert. Hanging out in low bushes along road.

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

None. I'd never seen anything like it before. I suspected the lark bunting from ~~past~~ previous pictures.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: None. I know most of the small birds in this area and it certainly wasn't one of them.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: First source was National Geographic. It was close, but the plumage wasn't precise. Then checked the Audubon Master Guide. The winter male picture was very close. Mine had more white in the wing.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

They are considered rare in the latibong

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Field notes attached

Description from notes taken at time of sighting ☒ notes made later ☐ from memory ☐

Observer: Jim Woolf

Signature:

James H. Woolf

Address: 2522 So. 1800 East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84106

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Jim Ure

Date prepared: 9/2/87

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

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mer (at 13,000 feet)

in Lat. II.

Burrata Pond

mature + immature

in a small
of Baurinque
wood, mygo

D

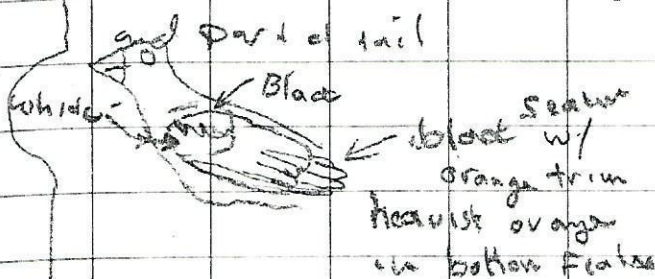
- Virginia's warbler
- blue gray gnat catcher

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Jim Vreil Jim in Lat II -
hot day, good birds

- peaked head - very distinctive overall
- brownish overall
- white eye ring - faint
- black + white speckled breast
- white shoulder on top when flying
- orange on bottom of folded wing (maybe paler - Vre)
- white patches on mid-wing and part of tail

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- bill appears somewhat larger
- long legs

- dark throat
- sitting on fence + feed on ground - near Neph's dump
- blue gray belt
- brown back
- pale belly
- black + white chest
- butt is dark
- upper chest salt + pepper
- belly splotchy
- faint bar along top of wing
- consorting w/ lark sparrows - somewhat larger
- tends to run rather than hop on ground

- Ferruginous hawk (2) !!
- Swainson hawk (7) !!
- Cooper hawk (1)