

Species: SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
(Vernacular name)

ANTHUS SPINOLETTA
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 3-22-78 Time Bird Seen: 11:00 AM

Locality: BEAR RIVER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE
BRIGHAM CITY; BOX ELDER CO. UTAH (See attached map)
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 7X35 BINOCULARS ; 30X TELESCOPE ON TRIPOD

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult

Light conditions: 11:00 AM - Sun high but behind clouds ; overcast but bright

Distance from bird, and how measured: 30 ft ; visual estimate

Describe the bird's overall behavior: The bird walked out of roadside vegetation into the road, where it joined three Water Pipits. Its tail-wagging was obvious as it progressed across the road. After 3-4 minutes, the Water Pipits flew off across a canal on ~~the~~ ^{our} left. The Spragues followed them, rising nearly straight into the air to a height of six feet before descending to the far shore of the canal.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Habitat is fresh-water marsh, where Bear River enters the Great Salt Lake. Elevation = 4200 ft. Vegetation at the observation site consisted of grasses, reeds, etc, 2-2 1/2 ft tall.

Other observers who independently identified this bird. (Please list name and address):

JANE F. JOUETT 3328 N.W. THURMAN ST PORTLAND OR 97210

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

The bird was junco-sized and of similar shape. Its plumage was buff brown above with noticeable brown streaks on the back. It had a light eye stripe. It was very white below from throat to flank with brown streaking extending from below the chin to the flanks. Its outer tail feathers were white. Its legs were flesh-colored. Its bill was thin and straight and similar to a warbler's.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

The bird did not utter any calls or sounds which we could hear.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

~~Sprague's~~ ^{Water} Pipit - seen concurrently w/spragues; Dark back and legs and much greyer overall plumage above, much tanner plumage below.
Vesper Sparrow - has chestnut shoulder patch, usually hops rather than walks, has conical finch-type bill.

→ As Water Pipits had been under observation for 20 minutes prior to the sudden appearance of the Spragues, the simultaneous observation of both species provided excellent means of comparison of features.
Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have never seen this species before or the Water Pipit before. I am familiar with Vesper sparrows and other sparrows and finches with which it could possibly be confused.

This report was written from notes made during ___ after X observation; from memory ___

NAME (print): ERIK H. BERGMAN

Mailing address: 5913 SW. CLAY PORTLAND OR 97221

Signature: Erik H. Bergman

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206