

October 19, 1983


Re: Chestnut-collared longspur (Calcarius ornatus subsp.)

Date & Time: October 9, 1983; approx 2 PM.

Weather: Initially sunny & mild (15<sup>0</sup>C); then local thunderstorm with strong, gusty winds from the SW, a drop in temp, and sparse rain/hail.

Location: Upland meadow in foothills about 1.6 km east of University of Utah Medical Center; open grassland/mixed vegetation (up to 30 cm tall); area covers about 25 hectares ringed with Gambel's oak and other woody species; exposed area with vistas extending up to 112 km to the west.

Circumstances: Observer was hiking and migrant-bird surveying along an old jeep trail on the south side of the meadow. Bird flushed from ground when observer was about 6 m away.

Description: Sparrow-sized, sparrow-looking---brownish striped---bird with a fairly short (i.e., compared to most other sparrow-sized, brownish birds the observer knows) notched tail. Tail was whitish on dorsal surface with a dark triangle pattern which alerted the observer (see drawing: ). There were no other distinct markings. In terms of behavior, the bird did not pump its tail as it flew. It flushed vertically to about 8 m then attempted to fly S; caught by strong gusts of wind from SW; flew in a circle overhead then went NE. It did not land within sight of the observer. Bird was heard almost immediately as it was flushed. Calls were somewhat musical, but seemed to be "weak" as if the bird was out of breath. Sounded finchlike, short note duration sung continuously as bird flew, like something between a house finch and a goldfinch vocally.

Other Birds in Area: Longspur-like bird was alone when it flushed (i.e., no other birds flushed with it). Robins, magpies, black-capped chickadees, flickers, and small, brownish sparrow-sized birds were seen flying either singly or in groups or were foraging in groups especially in the oaks on the perimeter. Juncoes and white-crowned sparrows were heard, as were many of the other birds.

Avocational bird fieldwork experience of observer: 4 years in the forests and river bottoms east of the Mississipi; 12 years in Rocky Mts., western deserts, and coast from San Diego to Seattle. Longspur-like bird did not fit markings or behavior of pipit, horned lark, warbler, junco, or vesper sparrow.

Sincerely,



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neuroscience)  
Research Assistant Professor