

Lark Bunting in Wake County, N.C.

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While birding on Dorothea Dix Farm, Raleigh, Wake County, N.C., at 0850 on 2 May 1978, we noticed a sparrow-sized black-and-white plumaged bird standing on the ground. Observing it with field glasses, we simultaneously identified it as a Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) by its black body and black wings with large white patches. Closer observation revealed light-colored legs, a gray conical bill, white-tipped axillary feathers, and a rounded tail with white-tipped rectrices.

The bird remained in the immediate vicinity of the original sighting for at least 10 days. It was seen by many people, including most of the participants in the 1978 Raleigh Spring Bird Count. A photograph by Merrill Lynch appears with the local compiler's comments on the count (Chat 43:56) and confirms the field marks listed above. Typically the Lark Bunting was seen on the ground in short grass or beneath a rabbit hutch, never more than 100 yards from the point of the original sighting. On a few occasions the bird perched in the lower branches of nearby Post Oaks and sang an incomplete Cardinal-like song. It was last reported by Robert J. Hader on 12 May 1978.

Although common in the short-grass prairies of the West, this species has been recorded in North Carolina only four times prior to the present sighting. A Lark Bunting was seen in Cumberland County on 7 July 1958 (Chat 23:20), and the species has occurred three times as a fall transient on the coast (Chat 28:31-32, 35:34, and 35:56). The Wake County sighting is the first spring record and the only one from the piedmont region.

The Clay-colored Sparrow in South Carolina

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Almost daily from 28 February through 1 May 1979, I observed an adult Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) in the vicinity of a barn at Doe Hall, about 5 miles SW of McClellanville, Charleston County, S.C. On 5 March two adults and an immature were seen. Although Chipping Sparrows were among the birds that fed on hayseeds in front of the barn, the Clay-colored was a member of a flock of about 20 Field Sparrows, the last of which was seen on 16 April. After that the Clay-colored came and went alone, though it fed with small groups of migrant Savannah, White-throated, and Song Sparrows when they were present. During its last week the Clay-colored underwent a head molt, and on 30 April its markings were noticeably darker and better defined than before. I photographed this bird, and it was seen by many observers.

This is the fourth winter and second spring record for the Clay-colored Sparrow in South Carolina. Pat and Rene Probst (pers. comm.) watched a Clay-colored at their North Litchfield Beach feeding station for several days during the "great" snow of 9 to 11 February 1973. Perry Nugent recorded one at his feeder just south of Charleston from 9 December 1973 through 10 January 1974 (American Birds 28:628). Another was seen on 3 December 1977 near Townville by Harry LeGrand and Sidney Gauthreaux (Chat 32:65). A singing bird at Columbia 20 and 21 April 1968 (Chat 32:78), one collected in Berkeley County 27 October 1927 (South Carolina Bird Life, 1970, p. 543), and two seen near Clemson 28 September 1977 (Chat 42:38) complete the South Carolina records to date.

The South Carolina occurrence of the Clay-colored Sparrow in fall, winter, and spring contrasts with the North Carolina seasonal distribution. Since it was added to that state's list