







824-01-2003

## Lark Bunting

*Calamospiza melanocorys*

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: May 25, 2003

Time: 8:00 to 8:05 AM

Weather: Mostly clear, wind less than 10 mph from the north

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Viewing conditions: excellent

Viewing distance: Perhaps as close as 100 feet

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular

Description: Ben Coulter and I were sitting on a log at the far east end of Gull Point conducting the International Shorebird Survey, when I glanced to my right to see a bold black and white bird land in a small sapling about 100 feet away from us. I quickly pointed my binocular in the direction of the bird and immediately identified it as an adult male Lark Bunting. I got Ben's attention and he quickly got on the bird before it flew to the ground. I got my camera out of the bag and Ben and I slowly approached the spot where it went down. We soon spotted the bunting hopping about on the ground occasionally picking at the ground among the patches of vegetation. It continued in this behavior slowly moving away from us until it came to the open sandy beach where it quickly took off flying in an easterly direction gaining altitude as it flew over the water and out of sight.

The following details were noted. It was approximately the size and shape of a Bobolink. It was entirely jet black except for the upper wing coverts, which were pure white. The tertials were sharply edged in white. The bill was sparrow or finch shaped, dark, and rather thick. The tail was short and black (the white tail tips were not noted). When it flew the white upper wing covers showed as flashy white patches on an otherwise all black bird. There was no mistaking this bird for any other North American species. Bobolink was the closest contender, but male Bobolinks have buffy napes with white scapulars, not wing coverts, and white rumps. The bill on a Bobolink is much smaller and narrower at the base. I obtained several photographs of the bird on the ground and a couple in flight.

I have much experience observing Lark Buntings, where I have seen hundreds on the breeding grounds throughout the western prairie states.



**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation – Round One**

Species: Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

Date of Sighting: 25 May 2003 to 25 May 2003

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams, Ben Coulter

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
<del>G. Armistead</del> R. WITMER	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

3/1/05