

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <[zoiseaux@lusfiber.net](mailto:zoiseaux@lusfiber.net)> .

1. English and Scientific names: **McCown's Longspur** (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1
3. Parish: **St. Landry**  
Specific Locality: **Botany Bay Rd.**
4. Date(s) when observed: **28 Dec. 2017**
5. Time(s) of day when observed: **late morning**
6. Reporting observer and address: **Van Remsen, LSUMNS**
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): **Paul McKenzie**
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): **not good---overcast**
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): **10x50 binos**
11. Distance to bird(s): **As close as ca. 30 ft. overhead**
12. Duration of observation: **1+**
13. Habitat: **wide open, short-grass expanse. We went here specifically to look for longspurs and HOLA. For habitat shots, see: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41390971>**

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): I was playing through my Lapland Longspur song collection on my iPod to see if I could get some distant LALO to come in close. They did not respond. Unbeknownst to me, the LALO song set cycled to the MCLO song set. At that point, a single bird flew in, obviously interested in the song, and circled overhead. At first I just assumed that it was a LALO. But it continued to circle overhead 3-4 more times, and at some point, I noticed that its tail was mostly white. Perhaps it was because it was really cold or perhaps it's senility, but it then took a second to process that this was obviously a McCown's tail! And that it was responding vigorously to McCown's song (which is distinctively different from LALO in its halting pace). Even to the naked eye in overcast conditions, it was obvious that the tail was mostly white with black in the central rectrices and the tips of almost all rectrices. Also, it gave two-noted dry call likely analogous to LALO rattle but sounded lower-pitched and with a longer pause between the two notes. When the iPod continued (alphabetically) to Smith's song, the bird stopped circling, flew up high, and disappeared. Despite 2.5 more hours of searching in the area, including with tape playback, we did not find any trace of the bird. To see such a good bird and not be able to document it was extremely frustrating, especially because a faster-thinking person would have scrambled much sooner for the camera ... especially because now I have to write up a sight record.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*): See above. An obvious longspur, even by call notes, but differing from LALO-SMLO in extensive white in tail, clearly far more than outer rectrices, appearing mostly white with black tail tip to naked eye. Not Chestnut-collared because tail clearly with a terminal band, not the more V-shaped pattern of CCLO (and call notes not CCLO). The underparts showed no distinctive markings of any kind, unlike the contrasting markings seen on LALO, and appeared basically uniformly gray, possibly with some faint markings. Nonetheless, the light was not great and we were looking at a moving target, albeit circling rather slowly, and so I worry about accuracy and power of suggestion once MCLO tail pattern became obvious; however, I am 100% certain that the underparts were dull and weakly marked at best.

16. Voice: See above.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): See above

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): No

19. Previous experience with this species: Extensive in Colorado, most recently in October 2015, when I spent 2 days focusing on McCown's and Chestnut-collareds, during which I must have looked at hundreds of both in flight to study tail patterns and calls.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):  
[none](#)

a. at time of observation: [none](#)

b. after observation: [none](#)

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	<a href="#">see eBird list</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? [Yes](#). If not, explain:

23. Date: [17 Jan. 2018](#)

Time:

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website?           [YES](#)          

If yes, may we include your name with the report? [YES](#)