

06-069

Lazuli Bunting

Comments from First Circulation

Record # 06-069 Species: Lazuli Bunting
 Dates: 1 June 2005 Member: Colin Jones Circ. # 1
 Age/Sex: SY female Subspecies/Morph _____
 : _____
 Vote: Yes: No (I.D.): No Voting Date: 13 January 2007
 _____ (Origin): _____

Comments: **It would have been quite difficult to accept this record had it been a sight record only. Given, however, that this very thorough and detailed report includes measurements and a series of excellent photographs that help to further support the identification of this individual as a female Lazuli Bunting, I feel quite comfortable accepting this record.**

Record # 06-069 Species: Lazuli Bunting
 Dates: 1 June 2005 Member: Glenn Coady Circ. # 1
 Age/Sex: _____ Subspecies/Morph _____
 : _____
 Vote: Yes: No (I.D.): No Voting Date: 16 February 2007
 _____ (Origin): _____

Comments: **Impeccable documentation – very convincing.**

Record # 06-069 Species: Lazuli Bunting
 Dates: 1 June 2005 Member: Jean Iron Circ. # 1
 Age/Sex: Female in first alternate plumage Subspecies/Morph _____
 : _____
 Vote: Yes: No (I.D.): No Voting Date: 12 December 2006
 _____ (Origin): _____

Comments: **Diagnostic photos and clear written documentation of a female examined. No sign of hybridization with Indigo Bunting. Lazuli Buntings have a limited first prealternate molt (Pyle 1997 and BNA #232, 1996).**

Record # 06-069 Species: Lazuli Bunting
 Dates: 1 June 2005 Member: McLaughlin Circ. # 1
 Age/Sex: 1st alternate female Subspecies/Morph _____
 : _____
 Vote: Yes: No (I.D.): No Voting Date: December 11 2006
 _____ (Origin): _____

Comments:
 A meticulous report combined with the three photos provided at the time of my round one vote. The package adds up to a very solid documentation. Measurements add strength with the tail length providing diagnostic separation from female Indigo Bunting.

Record # 2006-69 Species: Lazuli Bunting
 Dates: June 1, 2005 (Long Point) Member: Wormington Circ. # 1
 Age/Sex: _____ Subspecies/Morph _____
 : _____
 Vote: Yes: No (I.D.): No Voting Date: February 2007
 _____ (Origin): _____

Comments — When I first looked at the photos I could not see why this bird had been identified as a Lazuli Bunting. After considerable research, it continues to be clear that this bird is not a Lazuli Bunting. Plumage features clearly indicate Indigo Bunting. Measurements of the bird are problematic, and I don't know what to make of them — I recognize that they are closer to Lazuli, but the bird's plumage does not support the claimed ID. Detailed analysis:

Upperparts — On the back the bird has very indistinct "striations" which is caused by the centre of the feathers to be ever so slightly darker. This is characteristic of Indigo Bunting. The back of Lazuli Bunting should be very smooth and also should be a "warm" brown, not a "hard" brown as in the photos. Here is a link to a female Lazuli Bunting that shows this appearance:

<http://www.schmoker.org/BirdPics/Photos/Sparrows/LAZB2.jpg> Note: Re this link, note that the photo may be slightly dark and thus needs to be lightened up a bit. Also note that the darkish areas on the bird's back is not surface colouring, but rather is caused by some feathers that are slightly raised.

Wingbars — On the Long Point bird, the lighter wingbar is light brown (or dirty buff). Lazuli Bunting characteristically has a whitish wing bar. The same link above shows a Lazuli Bunting with a distinctly whitish (or clearish buff) wingbar; we know that this bird is a Lazuli Bunting, since here is a link to the front of the bird:

<http://www.schmoker.org/BirdPics/Photos/Sparrows/LAZB1.jpg>

Underparts — The Long Point bird clearly shows very whitish underparts which is typical of Indigo. Lazuli always has extensive areas of clear buff. Also, the Long Point bird shows abundant (but fine and indistinct) streaking on the underside, again typical of Indigo but not Lazuli. Again look at the same link as above (Colorado bird):

<http://www.schmoker.org/BirdPics/Photos/Sparrows/LAZB1.jpg> Admittantly this is an adult bird, but immatures likewise portray this appearance.

Head — Lazuli has more of a concolor head than the Long Point bird. The Long Point bird has considerable contrast which is caused mostly by the white throat. For comparison, compare again to the Colorado bird.

I asked Paul Lehman and Julian Hough to view the Long Point photos, and here are their comments:

Paul Lehman — "I don't see any reason why it is not an oddly pale-headed and underparted Indigo. The back color and wingbars look more typical of Indigo. It is certainly a somewhat strange bird, but not a typical Lazuli!"

Julian Hough — "Umm, yeah, a close match and yet subtly different. Upperpart view, I wouldn't bet my life on guessing which species [Long Point versus Colorado bird], but the underside view is much different than the Long Point bird and to me, I think it's the underparts that really hold the key, especially when the upperparts can be (as shown) somewhat ambiguous."

The above comments from Paul and Julian were contained within e-mails to AW, they were not intended as a full review of the Long Point bird.

Record #	<u>06-069</u>	Species:	<u>Lazuli Bunting</u>		
Dates:	<u>1 June 2005</u>	Member:	<u>M.Bain</u>	Circ.	<u>1</u>
Age/Sex:	<u>1 ? adult female</u>	Subspecies/Morp	<u>h:</u>		
Vote:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Voting	<u>10 December 2006</u>		
	: <input type="checkbox"/> (I.D.): <input type="checkbox"/> (Origin): <input type="checkbox"/>	Date:	<u>_____</u>		

Comments: Surely Denis LePage could have provided a written report to accompany these photos? I think this should be requested – he must have some ageing information from in hand examination at least. This significant record did not make it to North American Birds.

Record #	06-69	Species:	Lazuli Bunting		
Dates:	1 June 2005	Member:	Mark Peck	Circ. #	1
Age/Sex:		Subspecies/Morph:			
Vote:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Voting Date:	2 March 2007
	: ____	(I.D.): ____	(Origin): ____		

Comments: **see hard copy, excellent description and photos**

Additional Information for Consideration (via Alan Wormington, March 2007):

[the attached images are of a Connecticut bird photographed by Julian Hough]

Lazuli or not Lazuli..that is the question?

By Julian Hough



1st-year male Lazuli Bunting, Hammonasset S.P, 1/20/07 (JulianHough/www.naturescapeimages.net)
Note the two pale wingbars, uniform upperparts and unstreaked, throat and breast compared to Indigo Bunting. In good light the blue bloom to the greater coverts, alula, primary fringes and rectrices was obvious. Closer inspection revealed blueish bases to the mantle feathers combined with the blue rectrices indicated that the bird was in fact a first-year male, not a female.(Julian Hough)



1st-year male Lazuli Bunting, Hammonasset S.P, 1/20/07 (JulianHough/www.naturescapeimages.net)

The throat is buffish, not white as in Indigo Bunting and is concolorous with the head and breast.

The underparts are uniform and lack the blurry streaks shown by f-y Indigo Buntings.

The subtle plumage tones of this individual could easily be altered by the light conditions, but when seen well, the upperbreast was strikingly honey colored and characteristic of this species. (Julian Hough)



Three photos of Connecticut bird, by Julian Hough.