$4\frac{1}{6}$, $6\frac{1}{6}$.

Shores and prairies of the Upper Missouri, and probably found on all streams of the Western Territories.

Male.

The upper parts are light greyish-olive, tinged with grey on the head and shoulders. Wings and tail brown, edged with yellowish-olive. The lower parts and sides of the neck tinged with yellow, which increases in depth on the sides, including the inferior tail coverts.

Bill along the ridge $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, along the gap $\frac{1}{2}$, to end of tail $4\frac{1}{6}$ inches; alar extent $6\frac{1}{6}$; wing from flexure $2\frac{1}{4}$; tail $1\frac{3}{4}$. Sides brown. Tarsus $\frac{3}{4}$ inch; middle toe $\frac{3}{8}$, its claw rather more than $\frac{1}{8}$; hind toe $\frac{1}{4}$, its claw $\frac{1}{8}$.

Bill and feet bluish-grey, lower mandible paler. Third quill longest. Female a trifle smaller, but resembling the male in every other respect.

FAMILY XIV.*—ALAUDINÆ. LARKS.

GENUS I.†—ALAUDA, *Linn.* LARK.

SPRAGUE'S MISSOURI LARK.

†ALAUDA SPRAGUEII.

PLATE CCCCLXXXVI.—MALE.

The first specimen of this truly interesting Lark, was procured by Mr. ISAAC SPRAGUE, another of my companions, who shot it on the 19th of June, 1843, near Fort Union, Upper Missouri.

On several occasions my friend EDWARD HARRIS sought for these birds on the ground, deceived by the sound of their music, appearing as if issuing from the prairies which they constantly inhabit; and after having travelled to many distant places on the prairie, we at last looked upwards, and there saw several of these beautiful creatures singing in a continuous manner, and soaring at such an elevation, as to render them more or less difficult to

* See vol. iii. p. 43.

† Ibid. p. 44.

discover with the eye, and at times some of them actually disappearing from our sight, in the clear thin air of that country.

On the ground they run prettily, sometimes squatting to observe the movements of the intruder, and at times erecting their body fronting the pursuer. After procuring a good number of them, our anxiety about discovering their nest was relieved by Mr. SPRAGUE, who brought us one containing five eggs; and afterwards we procured several young fully fledged.

On first rising from the ground they fly in so deep and undulating a manner, as almost to preclude their being shot on the wing; and this they continue to do, forming circles increasing in extent until about one hundred yards high, when they begin to sing, and continue to do so for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time, and then suddenly closing their wings, they glide down on the prairie below. We had not been long in chase, ere we discovered that they could be approached much easier by riding after them in a small wagon, and on several excursions we all procured specimens. Sometimes when rising from the ground, as if about to sing, for some forty or fifty yards, they suddenly pitch downwards, alight, and run or squat, as already mentioned.

The nest of this species is placed on the ground and somewhat sunk in it. It is made entirely of fine grasses, circularly arranged, without any lining whatever.

The eggs, which usually are four to five in number, average seven-eighths of an inch in length by five-eighths in breadth, are smooth and dotted minutely all over, giving them a general greyish-purple hue. The young, after being hatched, follow the parents on the ground, and are fed with the smaller seeds of grasses, and gradually with insects, &c. They were already found in loose small flocks of eight to a dozen before we left Fort Union on the 16th of August, and some had begun their migrations southward, as well as many other species of birds.

SPRAGUE'S MISSOURI LARK, *Alauda Spragueii*, Aud.

6, $10\frac{1}{4}$.

Found on the prairies near Fort Union. Habits somewhat similar to the European Sky-lark. Abundant.

Adult Male.

All the upper parts are light reddish-brown, streaked with blackish-brown; the fore neck pale yellowish, streaked around the upper part of the breast with elongated brownish-spots. Sides deeper, or nearly reddish-brown. Second primary longest, the first rather longer than the third. Secondaries nearing the end of the primaries to within three and a half eighths of an

inch; all the outer veins delicately edged with white. Tail emarginate, two inches and one-eighth in length, with the outer feather on each side white. The second white also, but having a longitudinal line of brownish-black on the inner side reaching nearly the whole length.

Bill along the ridge $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{8}$ inch, brownish above, paler below; along the edge $\frac{3}{4}$, to pinion $1\frac{9}{16}$; wing from flexure $3\frac{1}{8}$; bill to end of tail 6, to end of claws $6\frac{5}{16}$; alar extent $10\frac{1}{4}$; tarsus $\frac{7}{8}$; middle toe $\frac{5}{8}$, its claw $\frac{1}{4}$; hind toe $\frac{1}{2}$, its claw $\frac{1}{2}$. Legs, feet and claws light yellowish-flesh colour, and transparent.

The female is very little smaller and precisely like the male. The young when fully fledged resemble the parents, but have all the upper plumage more distinctly marked.

FAMILY XV.*—FRINGILLINÆ. FINCHES.

GENUS I.†—PLECTROPHANES, *Meyer*. LARK-BUNTING.

SMITH'S LARK-BUNTING.

+ PLECTROPHANES SMITHII, *Aud*.

PLATE CCCCLXXXVII.—MALE.

This species was discovered by my companions, EDWARD HARRIS and J. G. BELL, during an excursion on the prairies of Illinois, in the vicinity of Edwardsville. Several specimens were procured by those gentlemen, and the following account of its habits has been handed to me by Mr. BELL. He says—

“We found these birds very abundant on the low prairie, near a lake in Illinois, about seven or eight miles distant from Edwardsville, whilst engaged in shooting Ducks, Geese, and American Snipes. They were generally in large flocks, and when on the ground they at once began to scatter and divide themselves, rendering it difficult for us to kill more than two at one shot; they run very nimbly, and in a manner resembling that of the Bay-

* See vol. iii. p. 49.

† Ibid.

NEH

Spangue's Missouri Siskin

Male

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon F.R.S. & L.S.

Lith. Printed & Col'd by J. T. Bowen Phila.

Audubon, John James. 1844. "Sprague's Missouri Lark, *Alauda spragueii*, Linn. [Pl. 486]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 7, 334–336. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319603>.

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