

A WINTER LARK BUNTING IN WINNIPEG

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On the morning of December 2, 1975, I observed a Lark Bunting, either a female or first-winter male, foraging on a small snow-free patch of ground in the parking lot of the Univillage apartment block in Fort Garry, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The bird was photographed and was watched for several minutes as it searched for food, presumably weed seeds. When disturbed, it flew into a small poplar bluff beside the parking lot and perched rather unsteadily in a young poplar. Herbert W. R. Copland and others were notified of the sighting, but a search in the afternoon failed to turn up the bird.

The following day it was located by Brian Knudsen and myself on the same bare patch of ground and excellent views down to 5 metres were obtained. The bird was not found on December 4, but was present during the early morning of December 5, again on the same patch, and it was not seen after this date.

This is the first winter record of the Lark Bunting in Manitoba. The regular winter range of the species is from southern California, central Arizona and central Texas south, and late dates of fall departure from Saskatchewan and Alberta are in early September¹. However, not only is this record remarkable in being extremely late, but also the Lake Bunting is a rare bird in the Winnipeg area at any time of the year. The species occurs frequently, if in irregular numbers, in the southwestern corner of the province as far north as Brandon and east to Cartwright^{2 4}, but elsewhere in the province there are only 3 published sightings, of which only 2 are in the Winnipeg area, the third being at Grand Marais.^{3 5}



Lark Bunting, Winnipeg, Dec. 2, 1975.
R. W. Knapton

It is worth noting that the fall of 1975 was mild and fairly warm, the mild weather extending into November in Winnipeg, and this may have helped the bird to survive into December.

I thank Herbert W. R. Copland for information on past records of Lark Buntings in Manitoba.

¹BENT, A. C. 1968. *Life histories of North American cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings, towhees, finches, sparrows, and allies*. U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 237.

²HOSFORD, H. 1965. *Wild Wings*. Winnipeg Tribune, Winnipeg, January 12, 1965.

³LAWRENCE, A. G. 1934. *Chickadee Notes* 688. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, June 2, 1934.

⁴LAWRENCE, A. G. 1934. *Chickadee Notes* 690. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, June 16, 1934.

⁵MOSSOP, H. 1971. *Chickadee Notes* 855. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, July 31, 1971.

