

820-02-1999

RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: Lark Sparrow Date of this Observation: 9/24/99

Date Found: 9/24/99 Last Date Seen: 9/24/99

Location: Moraine State Park

Township/City: _____ County: Butler

Person Writing this report: Debbie Yovanovich, Barb Dean

Address: Yovanovich: 120 Aubrey Dr. Butler PA 16001

Dean: 321 E. Meyer Ave. New Castle PA 16105

Phone: _____

Other Observers: Dave Darney, George Dean, Randy Stringer

Who found the bird first: Debbie Yovanovich, Dave Darney

Other documentation Included: (Circle all appropriate items)(Make sure all attached items are fully labeled)

Photograph

Audio Recording

Video Recording

If a Specimen, where is it stored? _____

Description: (Attach additional pages as needed—Please do not write on back of this form)

Two independent descriptions attached

Debbie Yovanovick
Butler, PA

820-02-1999

In Friday, Sept 24, 1999 around 1:30p I was sitting in the South Shore Day Use area with Dave Darney. We both saw a flock of about 10 or so sparrow type birds feeding on the ground in the parking lot. They all flew up and landed in a small tree. Using 10x binoculars (mine Swarovski, his Zeiss) we scanned the birds. I immediately noticed a larger bird in the center that had a spot on its chest and a striking face pattern. The other birds were Chipping sparrows so I put my scope (Kowa) on the bird. I immediately ~~noticed~~ saw bright reddish colored ear coverts, a striped head and a very obvious buffy-looking eyebrow. Dave and I both thought it was a Lark Sparrow, so we got a field guide (Petersons) and looked it up.

Meanwhile, the bird flew to another taller tree and Dave saw its black tail with white on the outer edges, resembling an Eastern Towhee's. We were absolutely sure it was a Lark Sparrow, so I reported the bird and it was posted on the internet. During the next hour or so, we and at least 3 other birders got excellent looks at it. We saw it fly several times and heard it "chip." It began to rain, but the bird was still in the area when we left at 3:30p.

820-02-1999

Barb Dean
321 E. Meyer Ave.
New Castle, Pa. 16105

October 8, 1999

LARK SPARROW (Chondestes grammacus)

Date 9/24/99

Location Butler County- Moraine State Park -South Shore at the swimming area.

Weather - cloudy with rain at times and some wind. It was overcast and temperature was 62 degrees.

Habitat- The parking lot at the swim area is half paved and half gravel and at the edge of the parking lot is a large pine tree that is 30 to 40 feet high. Behind the pine tree are some deciduous trees. Grass on the ground and this area is close to the water of Lake Arthur.

Time—About 3:30 to 4:00 PM. Total viewing time was 8 to 10 minutes.

Binoculars-Zeiss 10x

Scope—Looked through two scopes and I think one was a Swift and the other may have been a Celestron.

Sound- none heard

Distance—Guessing- bird was 125 to 150 feet away.

A phone message around 3PM from Linda Wagner alerted us that a Lark Sparrow was at Moraine State Park. She said it was at the swimming area at South Shore and that Debbie Yavonivitch and Dave Darney had found it. We raced to Moraine and I called Candy Gonzalez on the way. Candy had already gotten the call from Linda but could not leave work. We arrived at the swim area at 3:30PM. Dave and Deb were sitting in their cars and it was raining pretty hard. Introductions and I'm sorry I can't remember the other birders name. We asked if the Lark Sparrow was still around and was told that they thought it might be in the big pine tree at the edge of the parking lot with some Chipping Sparrows. George and I moved down toward the big pine and parked about 80 feet away but didn't see anything and went back to Deb and Daves area to wait for the rain to let up. After a few minutes of sitting in the car, the rain stopped. We heard one of the birders say, "There it is!" George and I kept trading the Zeiss binoculars back and fourth and got some good frontal views of the Lark Sparrow sitting on a branch of the pine tree. During the time we were there we never got good looks of the bird flying off the branch and back into the depths of the pine tree. This was a life bird. The two guys set up their scopes and George and I got great views of the bird as it faced us head-on while sitting on the branch in full view. My total time looking through both scopes was about 2 minutes. Total viewing time with scope and binocular about 8 to 10 minutes. Here is what I saw. Several Chipping Sparrow were flying in and out of the pine tree and the Lark sparrow was noticeably larger than the Chipping Sparrows. I always had a full frontal view of the bird except for the one time the bird turned its head and I viewed the right side of its head. I did not see leg color and did not see the white flash of tail feather. I did not make out any sound and did not view any of the body of the bird from the side or back. The adult bird sat on a branch facing us with the dark cavity of the tree as the blackish back round color behind it. The breast was a bright clear white and the breast color was barely grayish near the edge of the wing. The blackish central breast spot stood out dramatically from the bright white breast. I saw the head pattern very well, especially through the scopes. I was viewing the right side of the birds head and I was able to see the white stripe on the crown followed by the chestnut stripe below. The white eyebrow starting at the upper mandible and up over the dark eye and down to the nape of the neck. The beautiful chestnut color of the ear patch edged with darker blackish color at the nape of the neck. The chestnut ear patch separated from the eye area with some white around the lower eye. The pure white stripe starting at the lower mandible followed below by a black stripe that started up near the lower mandible, then the white chin and throat. The bill was medium to light color and more substantial than that of a Chipping Sparrow. Since this was a life bird, I can only say that I was surprised the bird looked so fresh and expected it to look more worn for September 24th.

Barb Dean

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Lark Sparrow (Chondestes grammacus)

Date of Sighting: 24 September 1999 to 24 September 1999

Location: MORaine STATE PARK

County: BUTLER

Observer(s): Debbie Yavanovich, Barb Dean, Dave Darney, Randy Stringer

Date of Submission: 1999

Submitted by: Debbie Yavanovich, Barb Dean

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

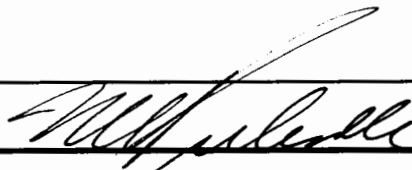
Specimen: No

Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Recording: Video			Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead		X						
D. Couchman		X						
P. Hess		X						
R. Ickes		X						
B. Reid		X						
P. Rodewald		X						
M. Sharp		X						
TOTALS		7						
DECISION		X						

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/27/01