











820-01-2005

## Lark Sparrow

*Chondestes grammacus*

**Location:** Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Pa.

**Date:** September 26, 2005

**Time:** 10:55 to 11:30 AM

**Weather:** cloudy, wind southerly

**Observer:** Jerry McWilliams

**Optics:** Zeiss 10 X 40 binocular and Kowa TSN 4 at 30X.

**Viewing distance:** about 100 feet.

**Viewing conditions:** fair

Details of sighting and description: I had just got in the car and started driving out of beach 10 parking lot when about five or six sparrows flew up in front of the car. When the sparrows flew up a single buffy looking bird with white outer tail feathers took off on the left side of the car. My first thought was an American Pipit or Vesper Sparrow. The bird immediately landed along the edge of the grass about 100 feet from me. Only its head was visible above the grass, but when I put my binocular on the bird the bold face pattern was obvious. As soon as I identified the Lark Sparrow I started digging in my backpack for my camera and when I turned back to the bird, it was gone. I waited around for about ten minutes or so, but it never appeared. I decided to drive to beach 11 to see if it might have flown to the parking lot there, but it wasn't. Upon returning to beach 10 parking lot I saw about four or five White-throated Sparrows and three Chipping Sparrows feeding under a cottonwood tree along the south edge of the parking lot. With the sparrows was the Lark Sparrow. I took several photographs and then studied the birds plumage for the next fifteen minutes before it flew to the southeast corner of the parking lot. I didn't see it again after that. The Lark Sparrow was a little smaller than the White-throated Sparrows, but noticeably larger than the Chipping Sparrows. Its buffy head was boldly patterned with brown. The supercilium was wide and buff-colored and the eye was nearly surrounded by buffy-white, which contrasted with the dark brown cheeks. The boldest markings on the head were the very wide white malars and wide black lateral throat-stripes. The crown was brown with a buffy central stripe. The mantle and nape was buffy-brown with dark brown streaks. The greater coverts and secondaries were brown with broad buffy edges. The edges of the median coverts were buffy appearing scalloped. There was a very noticeable pale patch at the base of the folded primaries. The flanks and side of breast was buffy with some fine streaking on the sides of the upper breast. The front of the breast and underside was dirty white with a large U-shaped central black spot. The bill was gray. I only saw it fly briefly, but the tail was dark brown showing obvious white in the outer tail feathers with some white showing near the tips of the remaining rectrices.

I have seen three Lark Sparrows in Erie County and many in the western half of the United States.

See photographs.

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation – Round One**

Species: Lark Sparrow Chondestes grammacus

Date of Sighting: 26 September 2005 to 26 September 2005

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2005

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

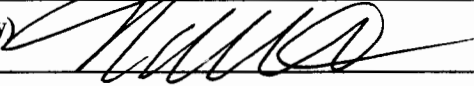
Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut								
A. Guarente	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	6							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary) 

Date: 7/24/06