

814-05-1996

## CLAY-COLORED SPARROW

*Spizella pallida*

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>DATE</b>       | 5 May 1996  |
| <b>LOCATION</b>   | Marcus Hook, Delaware Co, PA                        |
| <b>TIME</b>       | 0730 Observed twice for a total of about 45 seconds |
| <b>WEATHER</b>    | Clear and sunny. Temp. 60's. Wind NW calm.          |
| <b>OPTICS</b>     | Zeiss 7x42  |
| <b>OTHER OBS.</b> | None  |

On entering the park square to view the Delaware River, I noticed a sparrow feeding along the edge of the sidewalk. Upon observation with binoculars, I noticed that it was a Clay-colored Sparrow in near adult plumage. The bird fed eagerly among the grasses. As I unpacked my camera equipment it flew under some shrubs with a few other sparrows. The other sparrows were easily recognized as Chipping Sparrows. After some agonizing minutes of searching and pishing the bird again showed itself in the company of the Chipping Sparrows and allowed for a direct if not brief comparison. The description is as follows:

**Size and shape:** A spizella type sparrow, brown above with unstreaked pale brown underparts. It was the same size as the Chipping Sparrows.

**Head and neck:** The head was a dark brown streaked color with a faint gray central crown stripe. There was a bright white supercilium and a brownish triangular ear covert. There was no black line through the eye. The throat had a white malar stripe and when the bird looked straight at me, I could see bilateral whisker stripes.

**Upper parts:** The back was finely streaked with brown. In my hurry to insure myself that it was a clay-colored and to get a photo, I forgot the first time to look at the rump. On the second look I noticed that the rump was brown.

**Vocalizations:** None.

**Elimination of Chipping Sparrow:** The bird I described did not have a full reddish-brown crown or black eye line that the breeding plumage Chippings had that it was with. The Chipping has a gray rump and does not have a brownish ear patch.

**Familiarity with the species:** I have seen breeding plumage Clay-colored in Michigan and nearly breeding plumage birds in Texas. I have seen many basic plumage Clay-colored in Texas. I have seen numerous breeding and basic Chipping Sparrows.

I know this is a brief description but I didn't have much time to get it all down, mostly because I thought I would get a photo.

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*)

Date of Sighting: 5 May 1996 to 5 May 1996

Location: MARCUS HOOK

County: DELAWARE

Observer(s): Nick Pulcinella

Date of Submission: 1996

Submitted by: Nick Pulcinella

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

| Member        | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV | Class V |   |   | Abstain |
|---------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---|---|---------|
|               |         |          |           |          | A       | B | C |         |
| F. Haas       |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| N. Pulcinella |         |          |           |          |         |   |   | X       |
| E. Kwater     |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| R. Ickes      |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| G. McWilliams |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| P. Schwalbe   |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| S. Feldstein  |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |
| TOTALS        |         |          | 6         |          |         |   |   | 1       |
| DECISION      |         |          | X         |          |         |   |   |         |

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

8-16-97