

August 26, 2005

Devich Farbotnik

Thank you for submitting all the documentation for 2004. There were 4 reports which were not accepted. These are a Thayer's Gull on 14 December, a California Gull on 27 October, a Sharp-tailed Sparrow on 9 October, and a Pink-footed Goose on 16 November. Also the committee nearly unanimously voted to place your father's report of a White Ibis on 3 March at his farm in **Class IV-B**: A record for which there exists insufficient evidence for evaluation, simply because the description of the call note was all that really clinched the bird and no-one felt the description was diagnostic.

Of these, the Goose and the Sharp-tailed Sparrow were simply not clear enough on the video to be identified. The Sparrow is obviously a Sharp-tailed and will be accepted as that, but no-one could tell from the video if it was a Nelson's or a Saltmarsh. The committee accepted the Thayer's 2-1, but 4 members abstained from voting, including me. In my comments I noted that I saw the bird and called it a Thayer's. The committee essentially doesn't know what to do with young Thayer's and are deferring judgement on these birds until a better understanding of where the plumage, morphological, and taxonomic limits between Kumlien's and Thayer's lie (basically passing the buck).

The California Gull was the toughest decision. Personally I am not sure I could rule out a large (most likely female) Ring-billed Gull. First year Ring-billed Gulls can look very like California Gull and have a similar molt pattern, the range of variation between juvs and 1st winters can match the range of variation in 2nd cycle California Gulls. Some Ring-bills will retain juvenile wing coverts through the first winter, and some will lose almost all coverts and look more like a 2nd yr bird. Also the bill on the bird looked, pink-based in the video which would suggest a Ring-billed since California Gulls should lose the pink base in the first year, and have a yellower bill base. Basically everyone felt that a clearer look to reveal the fine plumage features was needed, and that eye-color alone was not enough to clinch the ID.

Thanks again for sending in all the documentation.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)

Date of Sighting: 9 October 2002 to 9 October 2002

Location: TULLYTOWN

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Devich Farbotnik

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Devich Farbotnik

Written Description: No

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. WILTRANT								
G. Armistead				X				
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris					X			
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer					X			
B. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS	2			3	2			
DECISION	2			3	X			

Comments: W. Tracer - would accept as "Sharp-tailed Sparrow"

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Signature (Secretary): Date:

