

803A-01-2003

UNUSUAL SIGHTING DOCUMENTATION

Species (common & scientific): Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow/*Ammodramus nelsoni*

Number of Individuals: 1 **Sex(es):** ?

Age(s) & Plumage(s): Adult

Date Seen: 10/8/03 **Time:** Mid-morning

Where Seen (Town/County): New Britain Twp., Bucks Co.

Exact Location (Park, Road, Lake): Peace Valley Park

Observer Reporting:

Name: August Mirabella & Judy Mirabella

Address: 1443 Wheaton Lane

North Wales, PA 19454

E-mail: augustmirabella@aol.com

Telephone (optional): 215-368-0594

Other Observers (Only those who saw & identified the bird with you): None

Habitat: A thicket patch of multiflora rose and other weeds and shrubs that borders a farm field on one side and a field of mostly goldenrod on the other. Due to the wet year, the area had several small areas of very shallow standing surface water.

Distance to Bird: 15-20 feet

Viewing Conditions (Sky, weather, position of sun relative to you): Excellent. Sun was behind us.

Optical Equipment Used: 7 X 42 Zeiss

Description: The bird was first found and ID'd by Judy with its back to us but the bright orange areas on the face were seen when it turned its head sideways. It was sparrow sized relative to other nearby sparrow species as opposed to say being the size of a Bobolink. The sharply marked back of length wise alternating blackish and brown-chestnut streaks and well defined white streaks were seen. The gray nape and crown center were seen. The bird turned and faced us showing the bright yellow-orange breast with pale vertical streaks. The breast color extended down the flanks. The breast was cleanly separated from the clean white belly by a horizontal border. The auricular patch was gray with a back edge of yellow-orange. The supercillium, lores, and malar area were bright yellow-orange. There was dark eye-line extending back from the eye.

Behavior Sitting in the bush at about our chest level before going down after about a five minute observation time.

Vocalizations: None

Supporting Evidence if Any: None

Separation from Similar Species: Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed would not have the bright yellow-orange breast separated sharply from the clean white belly. The breast on Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed would not be as brightly colored as the face areas, would have bold, well defined streaks, and would blend in with the lighter belly. A LeConte's Sparrow

would have a white center crown stripe, dark lateral throat stripe, fine dark sharp breast streaks, and a more blended duller colored back among other things.

Discussion: None

Previous Experience with this and/or Similar Species: Have seen Nelson's a couple of times locally and Salt-marsh many times at the shore.

Are you positive of your ID? (Why or why not): Yes. We saw it clearly and for long enough time to eliminate other species.

References:

During Observation: None

After Observation: Sibley Guide to Birds

Date of report: 10/11

Signature of Observer: August & Judy Mirabella

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

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

Date of Sighting: 8 October 2003 to 8 October 2003

Location: PEACE VALLEY PARK

County : BUCKS

Observer(s): August Mirabella

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: August Mirabella

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Amistead R. Wiltrauf			X					
D. Heathcote			X					
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

9/16/04