

## Documentation for the PORC:

Person Submitting Data: Cameron Rutt

Address: P.O. Box 223 Blooming Glen, PA 18911

Date: 21 October 2004

Phone: (215)-453-9585

Species: Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Other Observers: Ken Reiker

How Long Observed: I was nearby when Ken came upon the sparrow and together we corralled the bird for about two minutes. The bird was in sight for almost the entire time. This was around 12:30 PM.

Where Observed: The bird was seen at Pine Run Dam which is just outside of Doylestown, Bucks County, PA.

Conditions: It was a very overcast day and, in fact, started to drizzle just after viewing the bird. There was a slight breeze and it was fairly cool outside (50s). Despite the lousy weather I had good viewing conditions with the bird being within 25 ft. of me for the majority of the observation period. At one point the bird was as close as 15 ft. from me. I observed the bird through my binoculars.

Behavior and Habit: The Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow frequented the very edge of the lakeshore which consisted of mud and leaf cover. The first location where I saw it was a small grass clump about a foot offshore. It often was on the ground but would also perch in some of the surrounding grasses and vegetation which lined the lake shore. For the most part this vegetation was over a foot or two high. When the bird wasn't directly on the shore it was hiding in the grasses within a few feet of the water's edge. For the most part the sparrow seemed to choose to run or walk when it felt infringed or just simply wanted to move. We did, however, flush the bird a total of three times in which it flew short distances before it returned to the ground. With Ken and I working together we could often get on both sides of the bird and approach it at a close distance while the bird would generally remain in the same area. The last time the bird flew we did not pursue it but certainly could have if we had needed better views.

Species: The Nelson's Sharp-Tailed Sparrow was a striking bird in appearance. The orange, which stood out on the bird, was very sharp. The chest, flanks, and face (minus the auriculars) were all a beautiful bright orange color. The color remained continuous throughout unlike a Saltmarsh S.T. Across the breast and down the flanks were noticeable but diffuse streaking. The streaking seemed to be heaviest on the flanks of the

bird. The orange based streaking on the breast and flanks ended abruptly which accentuated a sharp line to the white belly. Besides the orange, the gray coloration on the bird stood out. The bird had a gray cheek patch (auriculars), crown, and nape. It appeared like the gray of the crown and the gray of the nape actually connected. The gray crown was outlined on either side by a darker line and the top of the auriculars also had a dark outline. On the otherwise dark back, four bright white lines stood out. In addition to the white streaks, the only other thing which stood out on the back was the straw colored tertials. I had looks at the bird from each angle (profile, face first, and back) which gave me a good all around impression of the bird.

**Similar Species:**

Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow- Other than being extremely unusual off the coast, Saltmarsh's have sharp defined streaking, a poorly defined white belly, and the brightest color to their malar. The Nelson's which we saw had diffuse streaking, a defined white belly, and consistent bright orange color overall.

Le Conte's Sparrow- Le Conte's have a white median crown stripe, defined streaking on the underparts, a more yellowish color, white edged tertials, and a streaked nape. All of these things were lacked by the bird at hand.

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation – Round One

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

Date of Sighting: 21 October 2004 to 21 October 2004

Location: PINE RUN

County : BUCKS

Observer(s): Cameron Rutt

Date of Submission: 2004

Submitted by: Cameron Rutt

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

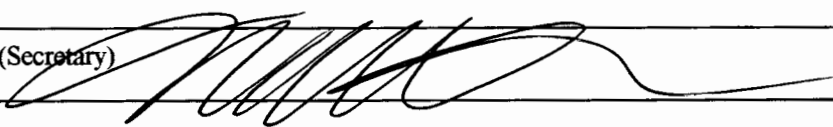
Specimen: No

Recording: No

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

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

12/7/05