

SEASIDE SPARROW

831-01-1988

DATE: MAY 14, 1988

LOCATION: CONEJOHELA FLATS NEAR WASHINGTON BORO, LANCASTER COUNTY, PA.

HABITAT: RIVER ISLANDS CONSISTING OF WET, MUDDY FLATS WITH SCATTERED COVER AND MUCH EMERGING VEGETATION APPROXIMATELY 8" HIGH.

OBSERVERS: JERRY BOOK & TOM GARNER

NOTES: BIRD WAS OBSERVED ON THE GROUND RUNNING BETWEEN COVER AS WE PURSUED IT. ON THE OCCASIONS WHEN IT FLUSHED, IT WOULD FLY A SHORT DISTANCE AND THEN DROP BACK INTO COVER. THE LENGTH OF THE SIGHTING WAS APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES, AND WAS UNDER VERY FAVORABLE CONDITIONS. LIGHTING WAS EXCELLENT AND BIRD WAS OFTEN WITHIN 20 FEET OF OBSERVERS, AND WAS VIEWED THROUGH ? AND ZEISS 10X40 BINOCULARS. BOTH OBSERVERS ARE VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE SPECIES AND HAVE SEEN IT OFTEN.

DESCRIPTION: OVERALL APPEARANCE WAS DUSKY GRAY WITH MOST DISTINCT FEATURE BEING OBVIOUS YELLOW LORE PATCHES. THROAT WAS WHITISH WITH DUSKY WHISKER STRIPES AT SIDES. BREAST WAS HEAVILY MARKED WITH OBSCURE DUSKY GRAY STREAKING. ITS BILL WAS LARGE AND WHEN FLUSHED THE BIRD HAD A SHORT-TAILED APPEARANCE. ACCORDING TO THE NGS FIELD GUIDE THE BIRD APPEARED TO BE OF THE MARITIMUS RACE.

TOM GARNER

RARE SPECIES REPORT

831-02-1988

SPECIES: <i>Seaside Sparrow</i>		NUMBER SEEN: <i>ONE</i>
SIGHTING DATE: <i>May 14-1988</i>		SIGHTING TIME: <i>8:30/9:00 A.M.</i>
LOCATION:	COUNTY & STATE: <i>LANCASTER COUNTY PA.</i> DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: <i>Susquehanna River Island 1 mi. south of Washington Boro</i> DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE:	
HABITAT: <i>Low - Partially Flooded Island w/ purple loosestrife & mudflats</i>		
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: <i>SUNNY, clear - sun at our backs</i> DISTANCE: <i>20/30 FEET</i> EQUIP. USED: <i>ZEISS 10X40 and ZEISS 8X30</i> LENGTH OF SIGHTING: <i>30 MINUTES</i>	
DESCRIPTION:	VOICE: <i>NOT HEARD</i> SIZE: <i>5/6"</i> PLUMAGE: <i>AS DESCRIBED IN ATTACHED SPECIES ACCOUNTS</i> ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): <i>AS DESCRIBED IN ATTACHED SPECIES ACCOUNTS</i> BEHAVIOR: <i>AS DESCRIBED IN ATTACHED SPECIES ACCOUNTS</i>	
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES: <i>Both Observers FAMILIAR w/ species FROM N.J. COAST & Delaware Bay Area</i>		
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES:		
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? <i>NO</i> IF SO, BY WHO?		
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who? <i>combined report FROM J. BOOK & TOM GARNER.</i>		
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space):		
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: <i>Jerry Book & Tom Garner</i>		
ADDRESS: <i>Book - 164 Warden Way, Lancaster 17601</i>		PHONE # <i>Book 569-2354</i>
<i>Garner - 509 Amesbury Rd, Lancaster PA 17601</i>		<i>Garner 569-3703</i> } <i>717 AREA</i>
SIGNATURE <i>Jerry Book</i>	DATE: <i>4/16/89</i>	
<i>Thomas E. Garner</i>	<i>4/16/89</i>	

831-03-1988

Seaside Sparrow: Lancaster County

ON MAY 14, 1988, TOM GARNER AND JEFFY BOOK WERE BIRDING A SMALL ISLAND ON THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER IN THE AREA KNOWN AS THE CONEJOBELA FLATS. THE ISLANDS LIE BETWEEN WASHINGTON BORO IN LANCASTER COUNTY AND LONG LEVEL IN YORK COUNTY. THE ISLANDS THEMSELVES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

PRIMARY VEGETATION ON THE ISLAND WE WERE BIRDING IS PURPLE LOOSESTIFE. MUCH OF THE VEGETATION HAD BEEN LAID LOW AND WAS MATTED DUE TO HIGH WATER LEVELS. THE ISLAND ITSELF IS OFTEN SURROUNDED BY MUDFLATS WHICH ARE CAUSED BY THE LOWER WATER LEVELS WHEN THE SAFE HARBOR DAM DOWN RIVER IS GENERATING. IN A SENSE, THE RISING AND FALLING WATER LEVELS SIMULATE A TIDAL SITUATION. THE USUAL CONDITION IS THAT THE WATERS RISE AND FALL ONCE, SOMETIMES TWICE, EACH DAY.

ON THIS DAY, THE WATER WAS HIGHER THAN USUAL, WITH PARTS OF THE ISLAND BEING SUBMERGED AND OTHERS BEING EXPOSED. WE HAD ONLY WALKED A HUNDRED FEET WHEN A SPARROW FLUSHED LOW AHEAD OF US AND THEN DROVE QUICKLY BACK INTO THE VEGETATION. ITS SHORT-TAILED APPEARANCE, DUSKY COLOR, AND MANNER OF FLIGHT PROMPTED TOM TO SAY, "I HOPE THAT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS". WE PURSUED THE BIRD CAREFULLY AS IT RAN MOUSE LIKE THROUGH THE VEGETATION. IT TOOK SEVERAL MINUTES BEFORE WE WERE ABLE TO PIN IT DOWN ON A SMALL PATCH OF MUD BETWEEN MATTED VEGETATION. IT WAS CLEAR AT THIS POINT THAT WE WERE LOOKING AT LANCASTER COUNTY'S FIRST SEASIDE SPARROW. WE CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THE BIRD AS IT MOVED THRU THE VEGETATION. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IT FLUSHED AND FLEW LOW AND FOR ONLY ABOUT THIRTY FEET, USING ITS NOSE-DIVE RE-ENTRY EACH TIME. OVER THE NEXT HALF HOUR, WE HAD GOOD LOOKS AT THE BIRD FOR AT LEAST FIFTEEN MINUTES. THE LIGHT WAS GOOD AND THE DISTANCE ABOUT TWENTY TO THIRTY FEET. TOM WAS USING ZEISS 10X40'S AND JEFFY WAS USING ZEISS 8X30'S.

A description of the bird is as follows: The sparrow was without wing bars and had pale yellow lores. Its breast and underparts were dingy in color, not white, and had faint streaking that was not well defined. The streaking was slightly darker than the background color. The upper parts, including the tail, was a dark grayish brown that was uniform in color.

In flight the bird always flew low and dove to the ground, not a perch on the vegetation. On the ground, the bird walked or ran rather than hopped.

Both observers are familiar with Seaside Sparrow from numerous trips to New Jersey coastal areas and Delaware bay-side areas.

The Seaside Sparrow was looked for the following day by two other birders familiar with this species but could not be relocated.

Submitted by: Jerry Book
164 Warren Way
Lancaster PA 17601
717-569-2354

Jerry Book

Record No.: 831-01-1988

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: Seaside Sparrow

Date of Sighting: 05/14/88

Observer(s): Jerry Book, Tom Garner

Date of Submission: 1989 LAUCASTER

Submitted by: Jerry Book

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater		X					
B. Haas		X					
F. Haas		X					
R. Leberman		X					
G. McWilliams		X					
S. Santner		X					
P. Schwalbe		X					
TOTALS		7					
DECISION		X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

B. Haas

Date: 12-26-89