





839-01-1996

Harris' Sparrow  
8 March 1996

On 8 March 1996 I received a call from John Kurey, a birding friend of mine, who lives in Mt. Union, Pa. [Huntingdon County]. John told me that he thought he had an unusual sparrow visiting his bird feeding station and that he would like a confirmation as he thought it might be a first winter Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*).

Later that afternoon, while enjoying a cup of coffee with John at his home, my wife Trudy and I witnessed a single Harris' Sparrow join with a mixed flock of White-throated Sparrows and Pine Siskins at John's backyard feeding station.

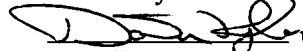
The sparrow remained in average/fair light for two to three minutes and allowed excellent looks through Swarovski 10x42 binoculars. It appeared slightly larger than its White-throated neighbors and acted as if very cautious. The legs and bill were pink in color and the throat was white. The beginning of a black, mottled splash was apparent across the breast. The crown and nape of the head were gray/brown with a hint of black showing. The aricular area appeared to be buffy/tan in color. The manner of feeding suggested that of a Fox Sparrow as this individual was actively kicking simultaneously with both feet in search of food.

I returned on 9 March 1996 to provide photographic documentation. In early morning light I was able to obtain several photographs (enclosed) that should allow for verification of this species as a first Huntingdon County record.

I asked John if he would object to having this sighting made public and informed him of the possible "migration" of birders to his backyard once the sighting made its way on to the birding "hotlines". His response was "let them come, the more the merrier". To date more than sixty birders have made their way to John's backyard to search for this unusual western visitor and most have been successful with little or no effort.

P.S. The Harris' Sparrow continues to be seen as of 15 April 1996 and is showing increasing black on the crown, face, nape and bib.

David Kyler



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# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Harris' Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia querula*)

Date of Sighting: **8 March 1996 to 2 May 1996**

Location: **MT UNION**

County: **HUNTINGDON**

Observer(s): **Dave Kyler**

**Mike Fialkovich**

Date of Submission: **1996**

Submitted by: **Dave Kyler**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **YES** 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	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*F. C. Haas*

Date:

*2-22-97*