

HARRIS'S SPARROW 839-01-2011

Nick,
I thought I would get this out to you while it was still fresh in my mind.

On November 24th 2011, at about 11:30 a.m., I was walking from west to east on the portion of the Cumberland County Rail Trail (CVRT) between Big Spring Road and Route 233 just south of the boro of Newville. It was about 11:30 in the morning on a bright sunny day. About a 10th of a mile from route 233 I encountered a flock of birds consisting of species including White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and perhaps others I don't remember at this point. The flock was predominantly on the north side of the CVRT. To the south was an open field with cattle, to the north were some homes up a hill but the gully between the raised CVRT and the homes was an open brushy woodland (I have attached a picture of the area with this report.)

Facing north, with the sun to my back, I began pishing identifying the birds as listed above, when I noticed a sparrow that was sitting up in the brush which was not a White-throated. I immediately noticed its plain brown face and pink bill and thought of a Field Sparrow, but I then noticed that there was no apparent eye ring, nor for that matter was there an eye line for that matter. The bird also seemed larger than a Field Sparrow. I also noted a dark cap (if it can actually be called that) on the top of an angled head, along with a white throat, and what I am calling (very unscientifically I realize) a black "goatee" that made a "V" shape into the center of an otherwise white breast and belly. When the bird turned to give me a side view I noticed there was also some streaking on the flanks, and what I would describe as two narrow white wing bars on a brown wing. I do not remember very well any details about the bird's back. I do not remember what distance the bird was, but I could tell naked eye it was not a White-throated, and it certainly filled up the field of view when of my 8x bins. At this point I wrote the notes down thinking that this was most likely a Harris's Sparrow. I then turned to my Sibley Field Guide to find that it was a good match for the first winter bird of the species as pictured there.

At this time no photos have been taken of the bird, but I know that others will be coming to try and relocate it. If the bird is relocated, and someone takes pictures, I will ask them to submit the photos to the PORC.

Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Vern Gauthier

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Harris' s Sparrow *Zonotrichia querula*

Date of Sighting: 24 November 2011 to 24 November 2011

County : CUMBERLAND

Location : NEWVILLE

Observer(s): Vern Gauthier

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Vern Gauthier

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	
D. DeReamus			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
R. Koury			X					
D. Weber			X					
G. Malosh								
TOTALS			6					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/0

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: 7/12/11