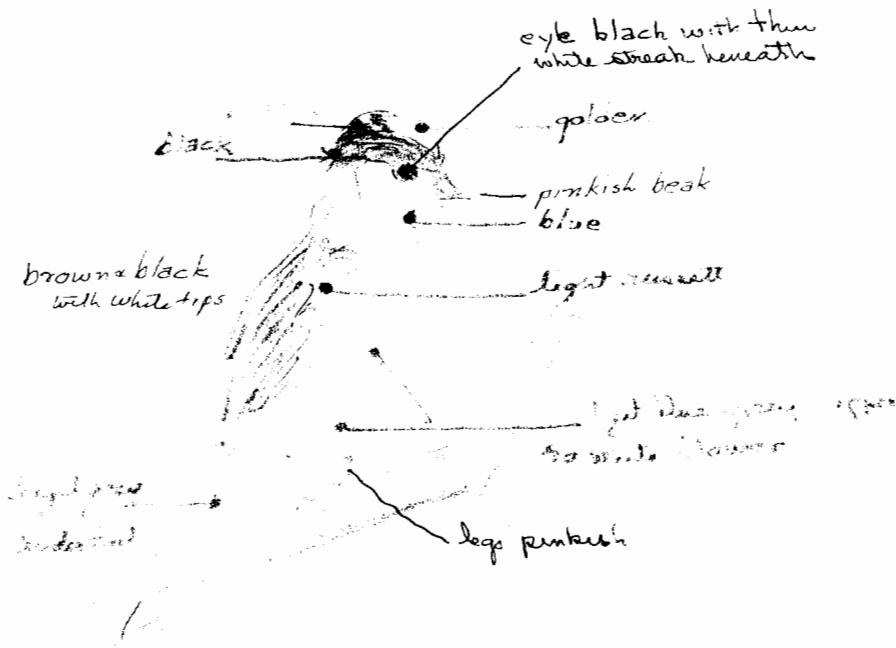


March 1961  
 Fresh Waterbury Rd.  
 Little Schhigh (stream)  
 Emmans PA



Call - 3 notes repeated over & over.  
 long, down 4 notes up 3 notes  
 ?

Golden Crowned Sparrow -  
 Field Notes for 10 notes.

Barbara B. Burwell

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee  
613 Howard Ave.  
West Chester, PA 19380  
nickpulcinella@verizon.net

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Golden Crowned Sparrow  
Subspecies (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) male

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): adult in breeding plumage

DATE OF OBSERVATION May 9, 2007 TIME about 1 p.m.

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Emmaus, PA

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Fish hatchery road, along Little Lehigh Creek

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Barbara A. Burwell  
Address 560 Oak Drive, Apt. 133  
City Harleysville State PA ZIP 19438  
e-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ phone (optional) 215-256-4888

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

NONE

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) park area next to stream -  
natural foliage along stream - mowed area. Perched on dead branch in tree near stream.

DISTANCE TO BIRD about 15 feet

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) clouds blocked sun, but  
weather was clear. Bird was close + easy to view

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED tried camera, <sup>zoom</sup> but battery failed. Bird was very close.

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed - size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): please see attached field drawing - my notes for later I.D.  
it was sparrow size, perched as shown in drawing; shape + proportions as drawn;  
colors as noted on drawing.

Field sketch attached. Journal notes attached

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

**BEHAVIOR** (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) While I rested on a bench the bird flew to a nearby dead branch. It stayed there a full 10 min, singing its 3-tone song over & over. Though I was close, small movements didn't startle him. It seemed unusual at the time - he seemed almost tame.

**VOCALIZATIONS**

Repeated for 10 minutes, a song I'd never heard before - starting with a high pitched clear tone, then down a fourth & then up a third - a 3-tone call - all notes clear, unbroken.

**SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:**

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_ Video recording \_\_\_\_\_ Audio recording \_\_\_\_\_ Drawing ☒

**Photographer/recorder/illustrator:**

Name Barbara Burwell

Address 560 Oak Dr. Apt. 133

City Hanleysville, PA State PA ZIP 19438

e-mail (optional) ba.burwell@verizon.net phone (optional) 215-256-4888

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

**IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:**

General condition not dead

If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known \_\_\_\_\_

**SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES** (how you eliminated others) Initially established identity in

Thayerbird software - at first by distinctive song/call, then by features that matched my sketch.

**DISCUSSION** - Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

I will attach a portion of a journal entry relative to this sighting.

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES**

I observe sparrows daily & know Sparrows of the N.E. I have no previous experience with this Golden-Crowned Sparrow.

**ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION?** (why or why not) Yes - because of unusual song/call & also because of my field sketch matching this ID.

**REFERENCES CONSULTED:**

During observation None (I was there primarily to fly-fish)

After observation Audubon Book of North Eastern US birds (useless because its usual habitat is west coast. Also Thayer software.

**DATE OF THIS REPORT:** Sept 24, 2008

**SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER** Barbara A. Burwell

I rested only a few minutes before hearing the clear call of a bird nearby. It slipped into my reveries like the memory of an old song, yet unlike it, too, because this birdsong was completely strange to me – like no other I had ever heard or learned before: a sequence of three brief whistles of three different sustained pitches. I looked for the bird and found him perched on the highest point of a dead and leafless lateral branch, no more than 15 feet from me. The sun was behind clouds which made it easier to see specific features. I could see that he was sparrow-size and his breast was blue-grey with little hints of gold and other warm colors. His beak was similar in color. He had no crest, (like a titmouse) and he was unlike any bird I had ever observed before. There were no distinct markings on his throat or breast. His legs were pinkish brown, and the edges of his folded wings were dark in contrast to his breast. Some feathers were white-tipped.

The most remarkable thing about this little bird was that he faced me without moving and sang his little three-note song over and over again for a solid ten minutes as though I were a purposely chosen audience and he sang for me alone. He wasn't distracted by small movements, such as when I pulled my camera from my pocket hoping, in vain, the zoom would help me see him better, but the battery power was gone! I sketched him then, rather hastily, to aid in later identification.

I realized, suddenly, that the world around me had faded away. My awareness extended only to an eye-to-eye contact with this tiny creature. The sight and sound of him brought a sweet peace to my heart as time seemed to stop. Moments later, from the corner of my eye I saw Ed approaching. I found myself back in the real world as the little bird flew away. I told Ed about my visitor and the magic of those moments while we ate our picnic lunch by the rippling stream.

That evening I turned first to my trusty Audubon book, but could find nothing there to identify him. I checked my Thayer birding software and in the process I listened to hundreds of songs, none of which even remotely resembled his song, but I was checking in the northeastern quadrant of the US. I turned to the pictures and specified sparrows to narrow my search, having exhausted the warblers, finches, and other small birds. When I clicked on a sparrow part-way down the list, there he was, and there was the song I had heard. I had, at last, identified my little visitor.

He was a Golden Crowned Sparrow, which was quite a surprise. Not the Field, or Chipping, or Song, or Fox, or House Sparrow, any of which were familiar to me. The features I had observed were there in picture. Puzzled by his unfamiliar name, I pulled up the range map and learned that this was a west coast bird which explained why I couldn't locate it in the birds of Pennsylvania! I accessed another map that showed me the winter distribution, and discovered small dots here and there in the east, indicating that one or two had been spotted here and there in our area. Thrilled, I realized I had sighted a little bird that was rare to the east coast. The magic of the day, and this particular event, was now complete.

To: Nick Pulcinella, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee  
613 Howard Ave.  
West Chester, PA 19380

From: Barbara A. Burwell  
560 Oak Drive, Apt. 133  
Harleysville, PA 19438

Phone: 215-256-4888  
e-mail: [ba.burwell@verizon.net](mailto:ba.burwell@verizon.net)

Dear Mr. Pulcinella:

I'm sorry it took over a year to report this observation, but it took me a long time to locate exactly to whom I should report, and what data. I hope the committee will still honor this sighting, because at the time, and especially in retrospect, I view it as a very significant event.

If you need further information, please contact me. Also, if you can shed any light for me on how a west coast bird finds its way to eastern Pennsylvania, I would be very grateful.

And if I can be of any further assistance to your committee, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara A. Burwell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Barbara A. Burwell

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla*

Date of Sighting: 9 May 2007 to 9 May 2007

County : LEHIGH

Location : EMMAUS

Observer(s): Barbara Burwell

Date of Submission: 2008

Submitted by: Barbara Burwell

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					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
C. Rutt			X					
J. Heller				X				
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary)

Date:

2/3/09