















Western Meadowlark – Dauphin County Spring 2009

Chester & Emma Zook own a dairy farm in Lykens, in Upper Dauphin County and as a family working long hours outdoors, have developed a keen interest in the wildlife that abounds on their farm, especially the birds. Chester and his sons, Steven and Amos, became serious birders about 4 years ago and have learned most of the resident bird's songs well.

On April 5th of this year, Chester was on an adjoining farm to their west, when he heard a flute like gurgling song that he didn't recognize and had never heard before. Puzzled, he searched for this bird but the only thing he could find was a Meadowlark. About this time, the bird raised its head and sang this strange song he'd just heard. Not quite believing his eyes, he checked his field guides and thought that this had to be a Western Meadowlark. It returned a few weeks later and he communicated with me and we agreed that it probably was the Western Meadowlark. After calling Chad Kauffman to announce the sighting and getting permission to put the bird on PAbirds, the next day, May 2nd, the bird was confirmed by Chuck Chalfont, Art Schiavo, Chad Kauffman, Marvin Troyer and Toby & Henry Petersheim by pictures and recording of voice. Many birders throughout the state got to enjoy this vocal bird and also met the friendly Zook family. They readily left their work to show the visitors where the bird was usually seen or heard. I was finally able to see the bird on May 11th while my wife Mary and I led a field trip of Amish school children from South Mt View School. I am sure many of the children didn't realize how rare the bird was, but most appreciated and realized where this bird is supposed to be.

Other birds that were seen or heard by the visitors were Grasshopper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Bobolink, several Swallow species. Also on the farm were Eastern Meadowlark, which provided the unique opportunity to see and hear the differences of the 2 species of Meadowlark.

The last week of this bird's stay on the farm, the bird roamed widely and at times left the farm for hours at a time, mostly going west in the direction it was first seen and heard. It was last seen on May 21st and the Zooks haven't been able to locate it again. The Zook family was impressed by the courtesy and friendliness shown by the many birders that perhaps got a life bird or at least a PA state bird on their property.

Aden Troyer, Oakland Mills, PA.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*

Date of Sighting: 5 April 2009 to 21 May 2009

County : DAUPHIN

Location : LYKENS

Observer(s): Chester Zook, m.obs

Date of Submission: 2009

Submitted by: Chad Kauffman

Written Description: No

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: Audio/Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
B. Coulter	X							
C. Rutt	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

2/25/10