

838A-01-1996

White-crowned (Gambel's) Sparrow

Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii

Location: Presque Isle State Park and Erie

Date: May 10, 11, & 18, 1996

Time: several times during the day

Weather: Partly cloudy to clear skies with good to excellent viewing conditions

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Kowa TSN-4 Spotting Scope at 35X

Details of sighting and description: There were good numbers of White-crowns this spring with daily counts easily reaching 1,000 birds. With such large numbers of birds I was not surprised to turn up a few "Gambel's" White-crowns. I saw a total of four birds without a great deal of difficulty. All four birds shared the following characteristics, unmarked light gray nape, cheek, breast gray fading to pale gray on the belly, pale gray mantle streaked with gray-brown, and rump unmarked gray-brown. The tail and wings were medium brown with two pale wing bars. The difference between the two races was in the head stripes and bill color and size. The nominate race had a white crown bordered by two broad black stripes that joined over the bill and in front of the eye. The white supercillium stopped directly over the eye. The black eyestripe was narrower than the black stripes bordering the crown. The bill was pinkish-orange with a dusky tip. The *Z. l. gambelii* had black stripes bordering the white crown that was about the same width as the black eyestripe. The white supercillium continued past the eye to the base of the bill. The black stripes bordering the white crown met on the forehead, but did not extend down in front of the eye as in the nominate race. The black eyestripe of *Z. l. gambelii* began at the back of the eye and extended to the back of the head. The bill of *Z. l. gambelii* was noticeably smaller and paler than the nominate race and there was less of a dusky tip.

One of the "Gambel's" I had at my feeder was not welcomed by the nominate White-crowns, which were constantly trying to chase it off. I did not detect this behavior with the White-crowns that I observed on Presque Isle. I was able to photograph this "Gambel's" White-crown.

This is the third year in a row that I have identified this race in Erie County.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **White-crowned (Gambel's) Sparr ()**

Date of Sighting: **10 May 1996 to 18 May 1996**

Location: **PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK**

County: **ERIE**

Observer(s): **Jerry McWilliams**

Date of Submission: **1996**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** 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			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. Haas

Date:

2-22-97