

Submission Date	2012-11-27 14:58:29
Observer's Name	Cameron Rutt
E-mail	cameronrutt@gmail.com
Observer's Address	Country: United States
Names of additional observers	August Mirabella
Species (Common Name)	Saltmarsh Sparrow
Species (Scientific Name)	Ammodramus caudacutus
Number of individuals	1
Have you submitted this to eBird?	Yes
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Unknown
Observation Date and Time	11-1-2012 11:30 AM
County	Bucks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	~2 miles West of Doylestown
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Pine Run Reservoir
Habitat	From the gate along Iron Hill Road, off Sandy Ridge Road, the area where it frequented was down the road (towards the dam) before reaching a large, weedy field on the right. From here, if you would take a right and walk to the lake edge, its favorite patch was ~150 meters towards the dam. The bird frequented a section of more marshy vegetation either directly on the lake edge or just in from the recently mowed swath that borders the lake. Few other sparrows were in the vicinity, although a few Savannah Sparrows could cause occasional confusion.
Optical equipment used	Swarovski EL 8.5x42 binoculars and a Canon 60D with a 400mm f/5.6L
Description	See photos.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	The bird was very difficult to get good looks at. After acquiring a decent, initial look at a sharp-tailed sparrow (which didn't look quite right for the expected Nelson's Sparrow), I spent the majority of time simply trying to

get adequate photos of the bird to identify/document it. The bird was amazingly furtive and escaped numerous times despite Augie and I knowing exactly where it had landed. Typical looks were of the bird in flight and it seldom alighted in the open. Our basic strategy was to continue flushing the bird until it would perch out in the open long enough to get good photos (which, fortunately, happened after some time (> 1 hour)).

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Largely through a series of photographs, we were able to decipher most of the field marks used to separate SALS from the more expected Nelson's Sparrow: long, pointy bill; brightest color (orange) restricted to the face, contrasting with the whitish throat and pale tawny breast and flanks; bold, distinct, black streaking across the breast, in addition to the flanks; and weakly demarcated buffy breast/flank and white belly. Additionally, the bird's more subdued mantle patterning and presence of dark both around the eye and within the rear supercilium also support SALS.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/chrysoptera/8146291291> (and next 5 images to the right)

Interestingly, this bird was probably associated with the passage of Superstorm Sandy two days earlier (most storm-related birds were found on 10/30), which presumably flooded large regions of SALS habitat along the New Jersey shore.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Click to edit

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