

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-10-16 07:11:13
Observer's Name	August Mirabella
E-mail	augustmirabella@aol.com
Phone	2153680594
Observer's Address	1443 Wheaton Lane North Wales PA 19454 United States
Names of additional observers	Scott Godshall
Species (Common Name)	Saltmarsh Sparrow
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Ammodramus caudacutus</i>
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult
Observation Date and Time	9-22-2017 12:30 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39353174
County	Bucks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Warrington Twp.
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Bradford Dam
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.229502, -75159320
Habitat	Lake shore on edge of field mowed periodically. Due to silt buildup behind dam, the lake edge has more and more marshy vegetation getting established.
Distance to bird	About 100 feet
Viewing conditions	Sunny
Optical equipment used	Leica Scope

Description	<p>First spotted by Scott Godshall. I was on the other side of lake at the time. He called me to advise. He & I assumed the expected Nelson's Sp. although it is on the early side for them. Scott will enter his own details as he saw it sitting for quite awhile getting good views. I saw it perched only once with a back view, which showed the back white braces and chestnut and black pattern. Then saw it on the mud going in and out of the wetlands plants via my scope at about 75-100 ft. Scott had said it had little color on the breast, which raised my suspicion before I saw it. I confirmed there was little or no orange on the breast and belly was white. The breast should have been about the same orange as the face pattern if a Nelson's but obviously was not. The streaking on the breast was also not the usual blurry pattern for Nelson's. The streaking was dark and heaviest on the side of the breast up to the neck and on the flanks. The streaking was also dark on the center of the breast but not as bold as the sides. The center of breast had relatively less streaking and didn't form the usual straight sharp break with the belly, which normally coincides with the edge of the orange background on Nelson's. So, that is the key point the I saw multiple times as it showed itself foraging. I focused on the breast and belly and forgot to check the bill or throat. Scott will provide the key detail of it having a very white throat as well. Otherwise, a very bright orange malar & supercilium and gray cheeks. Gray center stripe on the crown bordered by dark stripes. Gray nape.</p>
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	<p>Saw candidate fly. Decided to set up scope in position about 75-100 feet away that allowed view of edge where it went down. Shortly saw it feeding at edge of vegetation going in and out of view. This continued for several minutes.</p>
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	<p>The solid gray crown eliminated Grashopper, Leconte's, and Henslow's. Had the same bold pattern on face as Nelson's. The lack of or near lack of orange on the breast compared to bright orange on facial pattern, plus the bold dark streaking on the flanks and breast compared to blurry on Nelson's eliminated the Nelson's.</p>
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	<p>Hurricane remnants or persistent northeast winds may have contributed to bringing this rarity to this site. The one a few years ago at Pine Run Dam (Rutt, Mirabella) also was after a hurricane, although more directly impacting the area.</p>
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	<p>I have seen multiple Nelson's and seen many pictures of them from local eBird entries. All had the blurry breast streaking against the orange background that matched the facial orange color. So, I see this as a solid ID by two observers. Yes, I wish I had gotten a photo. Expected others with better gear later in the day to do that, but it didn't happen.</p>
During	<p>Phone APP on Scott's phone.</p>
After	<p>Sibley Guide & Sparrows of the United States and Canada</p>
Click to edit	<p>PORC-webform00430</p>