

\*OBRC Rare Bird Report\*

Date received: Thursday January 12, 2012

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\*Reporting Observer\*

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Original finder's name and address if known

Other observers' names and addresses

\*Report Details\*

Species,select one: Henslow's Sparrow

or other species not on list:

Number 1

Age Unknown - definitive alternate plumage

Sex not selected

Date you saw it using this format: 25 January 2010 April 29 2011

Time of day seen ~0730

Duration of observation (give times) ~0730 to 0735

First and last dates bird(s) known to be in area April 29

Exact location seen Old Cut Lighthouse at the end of Hwy 59 near the entrance to Long Point Provincial Park.

GPS if available 17T 549526 4714503

Habitat Manicured, lawn, shrubs and native grasses

Weather conditions clear and cool

Kind of lighting on bird direct sun and shade

Observer's distance from bird 5-10m

Optics used Swarovski EL 8.5X42

Photographs taken?

Video taken?

Illustration made?

Date this report written 12 January 2012

\*General Observations\*

1) Circumstances of the observation I was conducting the morning census at the Old Cut Research Station for the Long Point Bird Observatory.

When I approached the lighthouse property along Hwy 59 I flushed a sparrow which I immediately identified as an Ammodramus sp. as it flew at ground level about 10m across a fence line to settle in a garden with mixed shrubs and patches of native and ornamental grasses. I watched the bird forage in the garden and on the edges of the lawn for about 5 minutes before it disappeared into more dense vegetation in the west end of the property. The property is private and the bird was not refound.

2) Description. What immediately struck me about the bird when it was flushed was it's dark colouration compared to other Ammodramus that I am more familiar with. Upon first glance through the binoculars, the size of the head and bill were striking. The head was very prominent and the bill heavy set. The face,

particularly the supercilium area, was extremely buffy/cream/olive wash coloured which extended around the nape darkening dorsally and lightening ventrally. The buff colour extended toward the posterior of the bird but only on the flanks which eventually blended into a white belly. The flanks were streaked with dark brown/black streaks. There were distinct black markings in the auriculars. The crown was dark brown with a creamy/buff stripe down the centre. The back of the bird was beautifully marked dark brown/black with rufous, white and buff coloured edging. The greater coverts and exposed secondaries were mostly rufous with distinct black and white edging. The tail was short and pointed.

The bird could be likened to a mouse as it scurried and foraged along the ground in between the bushes and patches of grass occasionally perching upright.

No vocalizations were heard aside from a very sharp chip when it was first flushed.

3) How were similar species eliminated? The bird had a larger head and bill than all of the species below.

Grasshopper Sparrow: - separated by darker colouration and streaked flanks.

LeConte's Sparrow: - separated by darker colouration, buffy auriculars and face.

Nelson's Sparrow: - separated by darker more colouration and more defined field marks as well as a lack of gray anywhere in the auriculars or nape, also dark streaking on flanks.

Other Ammodramus: Saltmarsh and Seaside Sparrows were not considered, but the above descriptions rules them out.

4) Experience with claimed species Observed on migration once before, observed on wintering grounds in southern states, and observed on breeding grounds in Michigan State.

5) Field guides/references consulted none.

6) Any additional commentary/analysis

Description made from Field Notes