

LeConte's Sparrow Collected on the Outer Banks of North Carolina

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On the morning of 10 January 1975, I secured a male LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammospiza leconteii*), one of two individuals seen in a slightly wet grass-sedge marsh on Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Dare County, N.C. The collection site was approximately 4 km N of the lighthouse and about 45 meters W of NC 12 near the parking area for hunting blind No. 5. The bird had heavy subcutaneous fat and both testes measured 1.0 x 2.5 mm. The specimen is now No. 527751 of the U.S. National Museum. The identification was confirmed by George E. Watson. The bird collected was apparently one of the two seen in the same area on 29 November 1974 by Ray Chandler and Paul McQuarry (Chat 39:28), who also found the birds on 30 December 1974 during the Bodie-Pea Island Christmas Bird Count (Chat 39:10).

Birds of North Carolina (Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley 1942, revised by Wray and Davis 1959) lists the species as accidental in North Carolina with a specimen taken near Raleigh on 21 April 1894. *The birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians of Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area* (project completion report to the National Park Service) by T.L. Quay (1959) gives no record of LeConte's Sparrow for the Outer Banks, nor did I find the species in that region during the falls of 1964-1966 (Sykes 1967, The fall migration of land birds along the Bodie Island-Pea Island region of the Outer Banks of northeastern North Carolina, unpublished MS thesis, N.C. State Univ.).

[NOTE: Elsewhere in North Carolina the LeConte's Sparrow has been seen in Wake County on 23 October 1965 by H.L. Jones (Chat 30:30), in Macon County on 17 October 1968 by Mary Enloe (Chat 34:49), near Morehead City on 29 November 1970 by John Fussell (Chat 35:59), and in Moore County on 30 April 1972 by Carter and Parnell (Chat 37:26). Regarded as a rare and erratic winter resident in South Carolina (South Carolina Bird Life, Sprunt and Chamberlain 1949, revised 1970 by Burton, p. 635), LeConte's Sparrow was reported on the Charleston Christmas Bird Count on 30 December 1972 by Perry Nugent (Chat 37:16), on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island Christmas Bird Count on 28 December 1974 by Pete Laurie (Chat 39:10), and at Santee N.W.R. on 18 January 1975 by Dennis Forsythe (Chat 39:63).—JFP]

Harris' Sparrow in Wake County, N.C.

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On 21 November 1976, while studying a flock of sparrows in the new Beaver Dam Reservoir in northern Wake County, N.C., I found an immature Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*). The bird was rather shy but came into the open and perched in tall weeds for about 30 seconds. It was perched about 4 feet off the ground and about 30 feet away. The light was good with the sun to my back. I saw the bird a second time under the same conditions after reference to a field guide.

The bird was a large sparrow that was generally white underneath except for large brown blotches on the upper breast. The throat seemed slightly whiter than the breast and belly. The cheek was whitish with a dark line at the upper edge of the whitish patch. The crown also appeared to have some whitish feathers mixed with dark. The rest of the back was a medium brown. The color of the soft parts was not noted.

White-crowned Sparrows (*Z. leucophrys*) were particularly common in the area and "sat up" with the Harris' Sparrow when I made a "whishing" sound. White-throated Sparrows (*Z. albicollis*) were also present in the vicinity. The large blotches on the upper breast of the Harris' Sparrow separate it from these species and from the western Golden-

crowned Sparrow (*Z. atricapilla*). The combination of white on the cheek with black above, along with the blotches on the breast, indicates that the bird seen was molting from immature to mature plumage.

This apparently constitutes the fourth record of Harris' Sparrow for North Carolina. The first North Carolina record was an immature male collected by Burleigh in March of 1933 in Buncombe County and noted in *Birds of North Carolina* (Pearson et al. 1942). A later sight record of a single bird (incorrectly given in *Birds of North Carolina*, revised 1959, as "a flock of 46") was made at a feeder in Rhonda in November of 1946 (Chat 10:87). The third record was from the Christmas Bird Count at Tryon on 30 December 1976 (Chat 41:43).

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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Guest Compiler

(All dates winter 1977-78, unless otherwise indicated)

COMMON LOON: Excellent numbers on inland lakes included 96 seen by Merrill Lynch at Roanoke Rapids Lake, N.C., on 4 December; 45 on Salem Lake near Winston-Salem, N.C., seen by Ramona Snively, Pat Culbertson, and Fran Baldwin on 5 December; and 30 at Lake Murray, S.C., on 21 January and 20 on 5 February, as reported by Bob Lewis.

RED-THROATED LOON: Clark Olson observed one at Beaverdam Reservoir in northern Wake County, N.C., on 12 March, and R.J. Hader saw the same individual there on 18 March.

RED-NECKED GREBE: One was seen by Anne Waters on 12 November at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, S.C., and two were seen on Pamlico Sound near Frisco, N.C., on 3 December by Rudolph Keller.

HORNED GREBE: High inland counts were 1350 at Lake Murray, S.C., on 5 February (Bob Lewis), 126 at Roanoke Rapids Lake, N.C., on 4 January (Merrill Lynch), and 100+ at Lake Norman, N.C., on 4 February (Dick Brown).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: This species lingered at Lake Greenwood, S.C., until 21 December, with a peak of five seen on 15 and 18 December by Bob Lewis.

ANHINGA: One was studied carefully in flight by Paula H. Rose in eastern Wake County, N.C., on 15 February, a most unusual winter record.

GREEN HERON: Jim Mulholland noted an individual at Raleigh, N.C., as late as 6 December.

CATTLE EGRET: In the Raleigh, N.C., area, single birds at Lake Benson on 27 March (Jim Mulholland) and at Beaverdam Reservoir on the same day (Clark Olson) were rather early.

GREAT EGRET: Rare inland reports for late winter were one seen at Lake Greenwood, S.C., on 14 to 18 February by Bob Lewis, and another seen at Beaverdam Reservoir, N.C., on 27 March by Clark Olson.

WOOD STORK: Remarkable early winter sightings for North Carolina were three in Asheville on 2 December, as seen by Larry Freeman and Robert Bruce, and one seen by John Fussell at Fort Macon on 10 December.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Five birds at Santee National Wildlife Refuge, S.C., on 26 February, as observed by Bob and Lisa Lewis, was an excellent count for the Carolinas.

SNOW GOOSE: Noteworthy inland reports were ten birds (two blue-phase) seen flying south over Raleigh, N.C., on 8 March by Dick Brane; one at Rocky Mount, N.C., all