

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Common Name: White-throated Sparrow Scientific Name: *Zonotrichia albicollis*

Date: 12-15-91 Time: 9:00 am Length of time observed: 5 minutes

Number: 1 Age: adult Sex: unknown

Location: along the north side of a small canal, at the southeast corner of Wingpointe Golf Course at the south end of SL International Airport.

Lat/long: ? Elevation: ~4200'

Distance to bird: 10 feet Light conditions: good, hazy sunshine at side angle

Optical equipment: Bausch & Lomb 10x40 Custom Binoculars

Weather: Cool, clear, no wind, some haze

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

Size: Large sparrow size, similar in size to House Finches in the same tree, perhaps slightly larger

Shape: Sparrow-shaped, conical bill, medium-length, slightly notched? tail, head large and round, posture horizontal on branch, hunched appearance, with head set back on shoulders.

Color + plumage pattern: General color pattern was brown-streaked above, clear gray below, with striped head.

Head: Dark brown-black stripes on each side of crown, divided by narrow gray-tan stripe. Dark brown-black ~~at~~ eyeline; Broad supercillium, yellow on lore, pale tan behind eye; gray cheeks; very white chin and upper throat, outlined in darker color, dark lines on side of white patch almost as a thin whisker mark.

Underparts - clear gray, darker just below white throat patch, otherwise gray throughout to tail

Wings - brown, two faint wingbars

Back - brown, streaked with darker brown

Tail - brown, no distinguishing features

VOICE OR CALL NOTES: none heard

Behavior: sat motionless in ~~a~~ small tree, about 4' off ground, finally flew to weedy area along side of canal and disappeared in brush

Habitat: weedy old field, teasal, thistle, grasses, sunflowers, some small russian olive trees ~~at~~ along the canal, large grassy areas with golf course nearby

Describe what specific features you saw or heard that caused you to reach your conclusion: initially, hunched posture, very round head appeared different from the similar white-crowned sparrow, closer inspection revealed the yellow lores, and outlined throat patch, which helped eliminate white-crowned sparrow.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

Because this was a "tan striped" individual, the immature white-crowned sparrow is the most similar species. Because this species is common in this area, considerable time was spent examining the definitive features. This individual had a rounder, larger head; more horizontal posture, darker head stripes, yellow lores, and a dark outline around the white throat patch.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have observed both white-crowned and white-throated sparrows on numerous occasions in many parts of the U.S.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

none consulted for this sighting


Significance of record in this area or the state:

rare winter record

Additional material (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording in available):

none

Observer: MARK STACKHOUSE

Signature: 

Address: 1432 DOWNINGTON AVE, SLC, UT 84105

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

LAURA LOKKHART

JEAN REAGAN

Date prepared: 12-16-91

Return this form to: Utah Ornithological Society
C/O Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120