

CFO-ORC FILE #

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X7-0 (A)
Red 1/29/01 wpl**Species:** Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)**Date:** 9 Oct 2000, also 12 Oct 2000**Number seen:** one**Sex:** unknown**Plumage:** immature**Locality:** Barr Lake State Park
at Rocky Mtn. Bird Observatory office**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Brighton**County:** Adams**Time observed:** late morning**Duration of observation:** about 2 minutes**Description:**

I noticed a sizable White-crowned Sparrow (*Z. leucophrys*) flock outside a Colorado Bird Observatory office window and went out to look for "goodies". Once outside and near the flock, which was moving about in a tall weedy area east of the office, I pushed which brought a dozen or so curious sparrows into the open on a low straggly snag. On the back side of the snag I noticed a *Zonotrichia*-sized sparrow without head striping (the size comparison was easy because of the number and proximity of *Z. leucophrys* to this individual). The bird was a medium brown color, much like the *Z. leucophrys*, with dull gray underparts, a plain-looking face, light-colored full eye-ring, and a muted yellow patch on the forecrown seen when the bird looked downward for a second. Tony came up seconds later and the birds flushed to cover. He located the sparrow several minutes later in a nearby woody patch.

I was able to get a better look on the 12th as the bird perched in the open for almost a minute. The upperbreast was markedly streaked with short, dark, vertical streaks on a dingy brownish-gray basal color. The belly was more gray than the breast. The throat was white (forming a vertical rectangle), obviously contrasting with the rest of the neck, as well as the chest. I also had a better look at the head to confirm the presence of a yellow crown patch. The forecrown was basally yellow with dark streaking. The wings had two very obvious wing bars (thick, white fringing on the median and greater coverts). The rest of the head was fairly solidly medium brown, like the rest of the upperparts. The eyes were black. The legs were a bright pink.

Separation from similar species:

Large size eliminates all other North American sparrows (which was easy to judge due to the proximity of *Z. leucophrys*), except those in the genus *Zonotrichia*. The lack of head stripes, a yellow crown patch, eliminates other *Zonotrichia* members. There were several age classes of *Z. leucophrys* in this flock, so an easy comparison was made of head patterning between them and this immature *Z. atricapilla*.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): None heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 100's of this species while living in Alaska and California.

Light conditions: sky clear, sun high, to my back and right

Optical equipment used: Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest distance at 10 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none.

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Tony Leukering found the bird shortly afterwards and it was seen by several birders during the following days.

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Doug Faulkner

Signature:

Doug Faulkner

Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: This report was filled out on 26 January 2001 from notes taken the day of the sighting (the above description is exactly as written in my notes).