

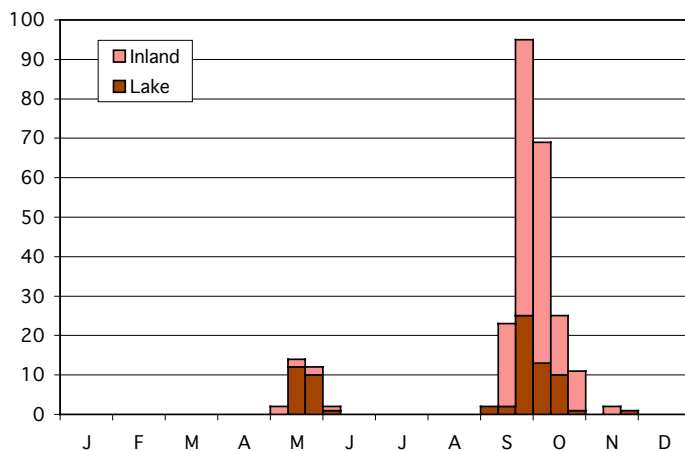
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Ammodramus nelsoni

Historical Information

First Published Record: The state's earliest report of this striking sparrow occurred 25 September 1875, when H.K. Coale reported a dozen near the present location of George Lake, Lake County (Butler 1898).

Noting only two records, Butler (1898) described the "Nelson's Sparrow" as a migrant and possible local summer resident in northwestern Indiana. Keller et al. (1979) characterized this handsome sparrow as a very rare to casual (south) migrant and possible summer resident in the north. Mumford and Keller (1984) deemed Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow a rare to very rare migrant.



Current Status

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow is a Rare (7) migrant. A few late spring migrants appear in early June, rendering it Accidental (10) in summer.

Occurrence

Although this attractive sparrow passes through Indiana annually, it prefers wetlands and wet meadows and is easily missed. It has been reported in some 30 counties, but is most often encountered in the northwestern corner of the state. This sparrow is also considerably more plentiful in fall than spring (see migration histogram).

Excluded Record

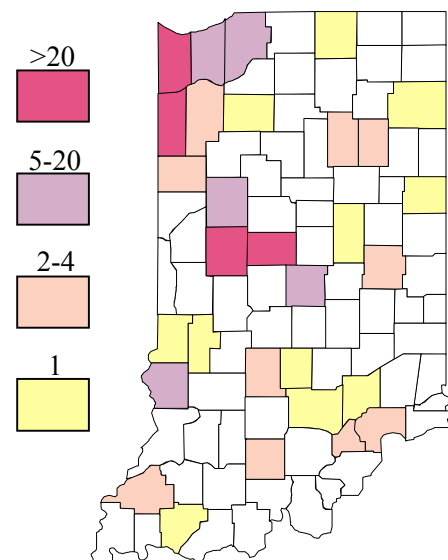
Virginia Reuter-skiold reported this species at Baileytown on the astonishingly early date of 12 March 1952. This extremely early record is almost certainly in error. In *The Birds of Illinois* Bohlen (1989), for example, states "April records are suspect unless substantiated by a photograph or specimen."

Status

Physical Evidence: At least nine specimens are known in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Chicago Field Museum				2
National Museum of Natural History				7
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	7	10	7
Central Tier	n	n	n	7
Southern Tier	n	9	n	7
Entire State	n	7	10	7

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Numbers per County



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Spring				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
3	15-May-2000	Clay St. Gary	J.J. McCoy	KJB
3	18-May-2000	Clay St. Gary	K.J. Brock	KJB
3	26-May-2000	Clay St. Gary	J.K. Cassady	JKC
Fall				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
25	27-Sep-1958	Willow Slough	R.E. Mumford	REM
12	25-Sep-1875	George Lake	H.K. Coale	BU2
11	4-Oct-2005	Lebanon Bus. Park	Larry Peavler	INB

Migration Envelopes						
Entire State						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	6-May-2000	---	20-May	---	5-Jun-2003	23
Fall	7-Sep-1987	21-Sep	2-Oct	18-Oct	30-Nov-1952	123

References Cited

Bohlen, H.D. (1989) *The Birds of Illinois*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 221 pp.

Butler, A. W. (1898) The Birds of Indiana, Indiana Department of Geology and Natural Resources Annual Report, 22:575-1187.

Keller, C.E., S.A. Keller, and T.C. Keller (1979) *Indiana Birds and Their Haunts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 214 pp.

Mumford, R.E. and C.E. Keller (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Tom Sporre preserve, southern Lake County, 5 October 2002. Photo by J.J. McCoy.