

Species: CLAY-COLORED SPARROW

Record No. 561-91-24

Location: SAUVIE ISLAND, COLUMBIA CO.

Date(s): DECEMBER 22, 1991

Observers	details	slides	prints	tapes
NICK LETHABY	A			

Specimen no. & location _____

Accepted 9-0
 verified _____
 Single rept. sighting ✓
 Multiple rept. sighting _____

Not accepted _____
 origin questionable _____
 exotic not estab. _____

Records split _____

Records combined _____

Disposition

Secretary's File
 Main File A
 Slide File _____
 Print File _____
 Tape File _____

Duplicate File
 details A
 slides _____
 prints _____
 tapes _____

Date observer(s) notified: 12-19-92

Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*

A single bird on **December 22, 1991** at **Sauvie Island, Columbia County**

Observer: Nick Lethaby 26 NE 32nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97232 Tel: (503) 231 0971
Other observers: Shari Erickson

Observation conditions: The bird was viewed on four different occasions for a total of about 8 minutes at about 10-15 yards range. I saw the bird perched and in flight. The light was moderate. I used 10x binoculars.

Description: The bird was in a flock of Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows. Its noticeably smaller size, and overall pale buffy-brown appearance made it immediately obvious. My initial reaction was that it was a Clay-colored Sparrow, but as Chipping and Brewer's can be rather similar in non-breeding plumage, I studied the bird closely to verify my initial judgement.

The bird was clearly a small sparrow, about the size of a Savannah Sparrow, which was available for comparison. It was, however, longer-tailed and smaller-bodied than that species. The underparts were a clean, unstreaked white, with a buffy wash on the breast. The head pattern was well marked, with distinct pale supercilia and median crown stripe. The sides of the crown were streaked darker. The lores were pale and unmarked. Behind the eye there was a dark eyeline. Along with the dark moustachial streak this gave well defined dark upper and lower borders to the cheek patch. The overall ground color of the head pattern was brown. The submoustacial stripe was white. There was a short and narrow dark malar stripe.

The sides and back of the neck were grey contrasting with the head and back. The back was brown, streaked darker. The rump was brown, like the back, but unstreaked. The tail was also brown. The wings were brown with two pale wingbars on the median and greater coverts. The tertials were blackish with pale edges.

Similar species: Chipping Sparrow, would show more rufous tone to crown and upperparts, would have a dark line through the lores, and would have a grey rump. Brewer's Sparrow would not have such an obvious central crown stripe or such a contrasting grey nape, and lacks a buffy wash on the breast.

Previous experience: I have seen this species many times before. I am also familiar with Brewer's and Chipping Sparrows.