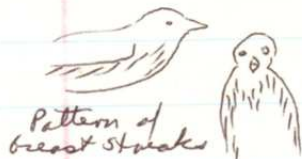


Savannah Sparrow - 1

March 17-20, 1984

Wilson Farm, NE Mills County, Iowa

Description: It's frustrating to try to document a ~~to~~ sparrow; there's so much one can describe, & so little that's distinctive. ~~Anyway,~~ here goes: Sparrow, about the size of a Junco, much smaller than a Harris's Sparrow. ~~Bill~~ Bill conical, thinner than a Junco's, probably pink. Brown above, white below, streaked. Usual sparrow face pattern: light line in center of crown, dark crown, light line over eye, dark line through eye, light line below eye, darkish cheek outlined in darker color, white line ~~along~~ ^{along} jaw, dark line below it, light throat. Significant question is, what color is it? and I record the face as buffy or yellow all over. Underparts white with dark streaks on the flanks & across the breast. When I first saw the bird, it had no central breast spot, but later it or one like it did. Legs pink.



Similar species: at first I just didn't

know what this was. Maybe it looked out of context, as it was visiting my feeder in the snow. (It fed on the ground)

Song sparrow has very heavy dark lines down lower jaws, like mustaches, & usually a prominent breast spot

Lincoln's sparrow: grayer face, buffy breast (not white), with no or faint breast spot

Savannah sparrow usually is yellow on the line above the eye or the whole face, but the yellow may be lacking or faint. This clearly wasn't a Song or Lincoln's, & Savannah is what's left.

Conditions of the sighting: No binocs or scope. The bird was at my feeder, on the ground & in a Forsythia, ~~10'~~^{10'} or so from the window. First seen 8:25 am, but come & went for 4 days. Description written while I was watching the bird & ~~was~~ between sightings. Used the National Geographic Field Guide, which wasn't as helpful as I could have wished.

Written May 26 from notes taken at the time.

- Barbara L Wilson
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