

HARRIS'S SPARROW (*ZONOTRICHIA QUERULA*) RECORDS IN ATTALA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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On 3 December 2004, I was taking my usual morning bird walk when I noted Field Sparrows feeding in a weedy patch behind our barn. As I stood there watching them, a large sparrow popped up to the top of a weed in front of me. I noted a black throat and immediately recognized it as an adult Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*). I knew this bird because an immature Harris's Sparrow had visited my feeder and patio in 2002. The immature bird stayed only two days, but James Sanders and Terry Schiefer did see it and verified its identity. The 2002 bird was a new bird record for Attala County. I did quite a bit of research on this species, for it was also a new bird for me.

This adult Harris's Sparrow was a welcome visitor. Later that day it came to the picnic table where I spread mixed bird feed for my local winter birds – Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*), etc. It returned again the next morning, and it stayed around our yard the whole winter.

The Harris's Sparrow was not shy or secretive. It was easily seen by many Mississippi birders who visited my home. It was viewed in the trees and shrubs and on the patio and feeders.

It was still here on 18 April 2005. Then I left for a few days, and when I returned it was gone--migrating north to its breeding grounds in Canada, I suppose. It was a real treat to have this unusual visitor, and I also enjoyed the more than 50 birders who came to see it. Two of the visitors were John and Marion

Fahnestock of Ocean Springs. During their visit John took the photo of the Harris's Sparrow shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Adult Harris's Sparrow at Henne residence, Attala County, Mississippi. Photographed 29 December 2004 by John Fahnestock.