

Napa-Solano Audubon's Rare Bird Alert #2 January 11, 2021- Clay-colored Sparrow

Greetings Napa-Solano Audubon Members, Family & Friends:

Location: The second rare bird found in recent weeks in our counties is a Clay-colored Sparrow. This bird was found on December 29th by Dave Haupt, a visiting birder from Oregon, in Napa's Lakeview Park. Lucas and I have been able to photograph the bird on Dec. 30th and most recently on January 7th. Lakeview Park is located along Lakeview Drive at the East end of 1st Street in the Alta Heights Hills. It is a small park with several small ponds that once served as a Napa reservoir. The Clay-colored Sparrow appears to move from the thickets surrounding the ponds to the pyracantha and bushes along the slopes adjacent to the homes on the Southeast side of the park. We have found it on our visits associating with Golden-crowned Sparrows in bushes adjacent to the homes. It is possible that it is using feeders at several of the homes. We were made aware of this overwintering bird being in Napa from an eBird Alert. This is the 7th Napa County record.

Identification: The Clay-colored Sparrow is a small sparrow of the Spizella family that includes Chipping, Brewers, Black-chinned, Field, and American Tree to name a few. The Clay-colored can be identified by its pink bill, gray nape, buffy face pattern, buffy to white supercilium and lores, pale eye-ring, and striking white malar with accompanying dark mustache, contrasting with its buffy flanks. Like the Brewer's Sparrow it has a buffy face pattern and medial head stripe but the Clay-colored is usually brighter and more well defined. The Chipping Sparrow has a similar dark eye-line but it extends to the bill and a typically whiter supercilium with a brighter rufous crown as compared to the Clay-colored which has buffy lores and a browner, streaked crown. Immature Chipping, Brewer's and Clay-colored are often tricky to identify as they are all paler than adults. The Lakeview Park bird appears to be an overwintering adult and is quite bright. Here are a couple of photos we were able to take. You may find more on our eBird Report located at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S78284525>.

