

# Introduction to Sparrow identification with a Gulf Coast slant

Cin-Ty Lee

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# Sparrow frustration?

- Views are not always ideal
- Little brown jobs



And more frustration.....





Sometimes you get lucky and the bird pops out for you....



And sometime it's easy?





# What to watch for in a sparrow

Overall shape  
head shape  
bill shape  
tail length

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Behavior

Habitat

Head pattern  
eyebrow  
crown  
eyeline  
eye-ring  
lores  
chint  
auriculars

Mantle

Wings  
wingbars  
wing panel coloration

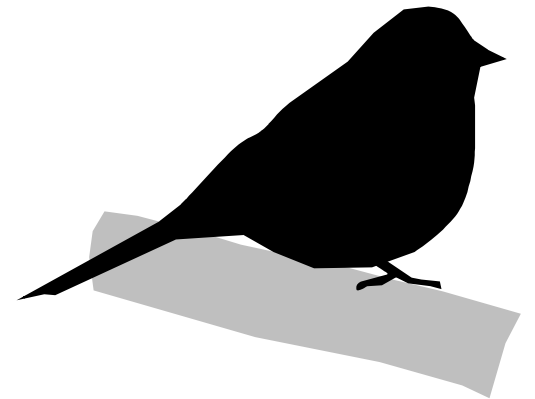
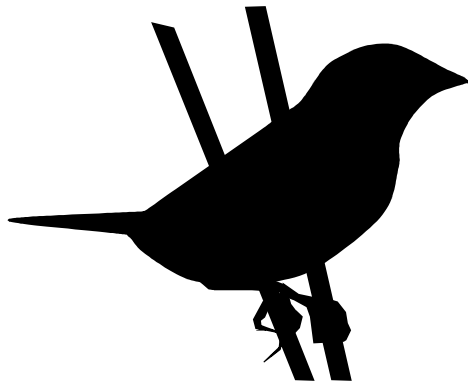
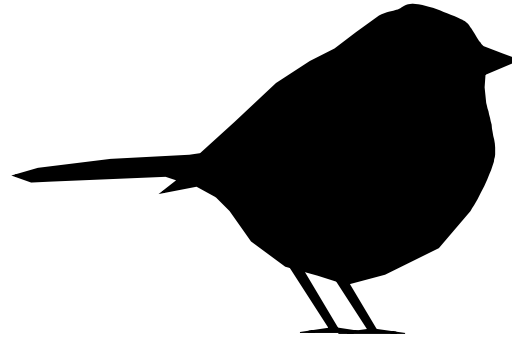
Tail  
color  
outer-tail feathers

Undersides  
streaking and color



**Overall shape**

tail length  
head size  
head shape  
posture



Cin-Ty Lee

# Habitat

Near water (cattails, sedges, freshwater, brackish water)

Tall grass

Short grass

Thickets

Mixed grasslands and trees



# Behavior

Skulking in understory or in bushes

Sits up easily on grass stalks

Runs on the ground through the grass (secretive)

Hops out in the open ground

sits on fences

## Mantle pattern and colors

scaly



streaked



More uniform



Does the bird have an eyering?



Does the bird have an eyeline?  
A supercilium?  
What about its lores?





And the auriculars?

--dark bordered?

--no borders?

--partial borders?



## Chest pattern



Streaked – note shape of streaks (lines or chevrons)

Buffy

Central chest spot

gray

## **Ammodramus Sparrows**

Grasshopper, Le Conte's, Nelson's, Henslow's

grassy habitats (or spartina for Nelson's)  
skulkers

typically run along the ground  
when flushed, typically fly very low and straight before ducking back into the bushes

small sparrow  
flat crown, shortish tail



Nelson's Sparrow

Mark Kulstad





Le Conte's Sparrow

Mark Kulstad

Grasshopper Sparrow



Mark Kulstad

Henslow's Sparrow



wikipedia

## Zonotrichia sparrows

White-throated, White-crowned, Harris's

large sparrows with relatively long tail  
large heads

brushy habitats

not particularly secretive





White-throated Sparrow



Harris's Sparrow

Mark Kulstad

White-crowned Sparrow



Mark Kulstad



White-crowned Sparrow



Mark Kulstad





Dark eyed Junco

Mark Kulstad

Passerculus sparrows

Savannah, Vesper

slender, heavily streaked

open grassland – Savannah

grassland with scattered shrubs – Vesper



Savannah Sparrow

Mark Kulstad





Vesper Sparrow

Mark Kulstad



## Spizella sparrows

Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, American Tree

unstreaked chests

small to medium sized

long narrow tail

open forest  
edge habitats

Chipping Sparrow



Mark Kulstad



Field Sparrow

Mark Kulstad



Clay-colored Sparrow



Cin-Ty Lee





Clay-colored Sparrow

Mark Kulstad



Mark Kulstad



Cin-Ty Lee





Cin-Ty Lee



American tree sparrow



Melospiza sparrows

Song, Lincoln's, Swamp

large and big-headed  
medium length tails

typically near water edge or in grassland-shrub edges



Song Sparrow

Mark Kulstad





Lincoln's Sparrow

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Fox Sparrows



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Swamp Sparrow

Mark Kulstad

Lark Sparrow



Mark Kulstad



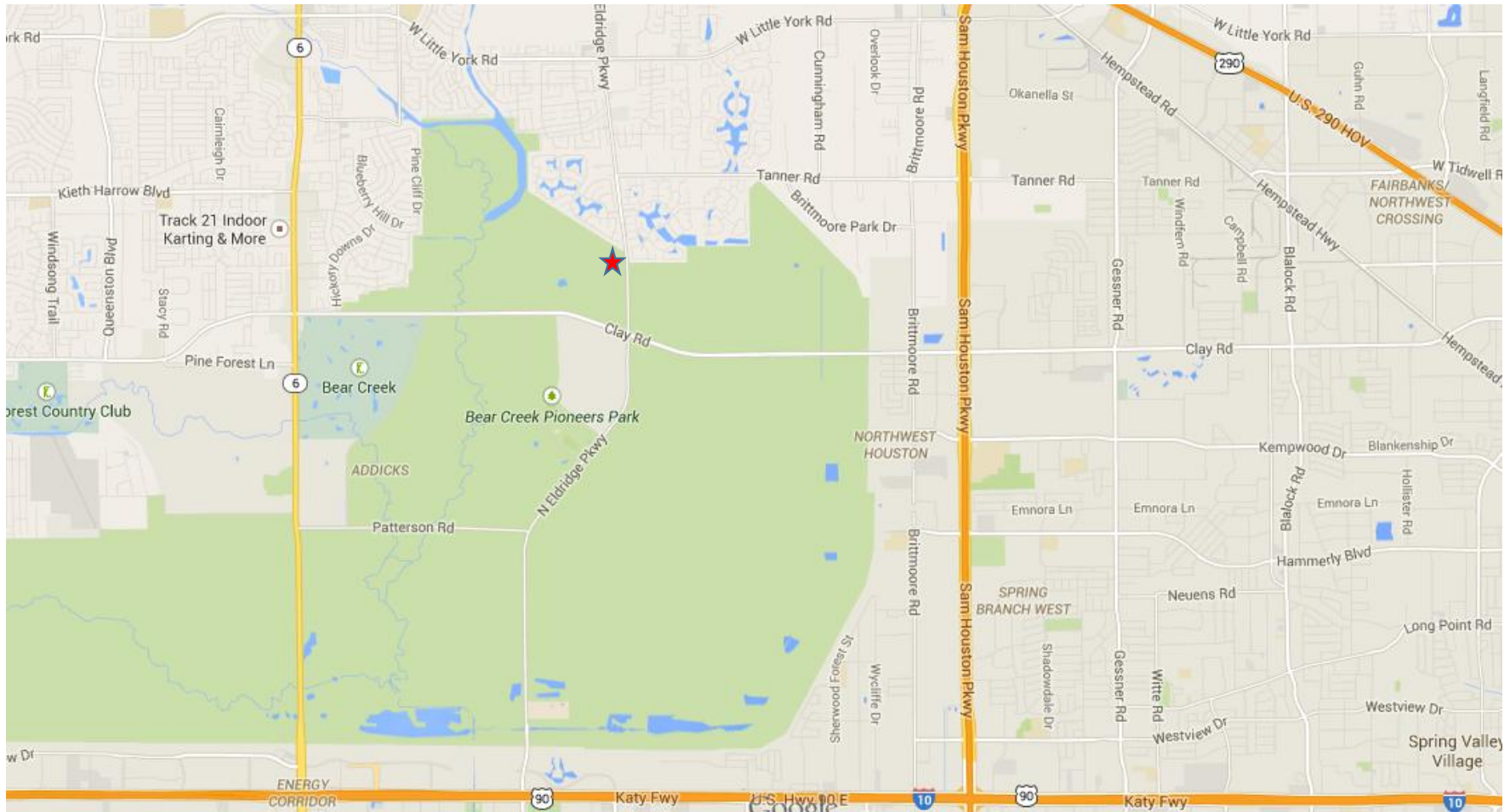
Lapland Longspur



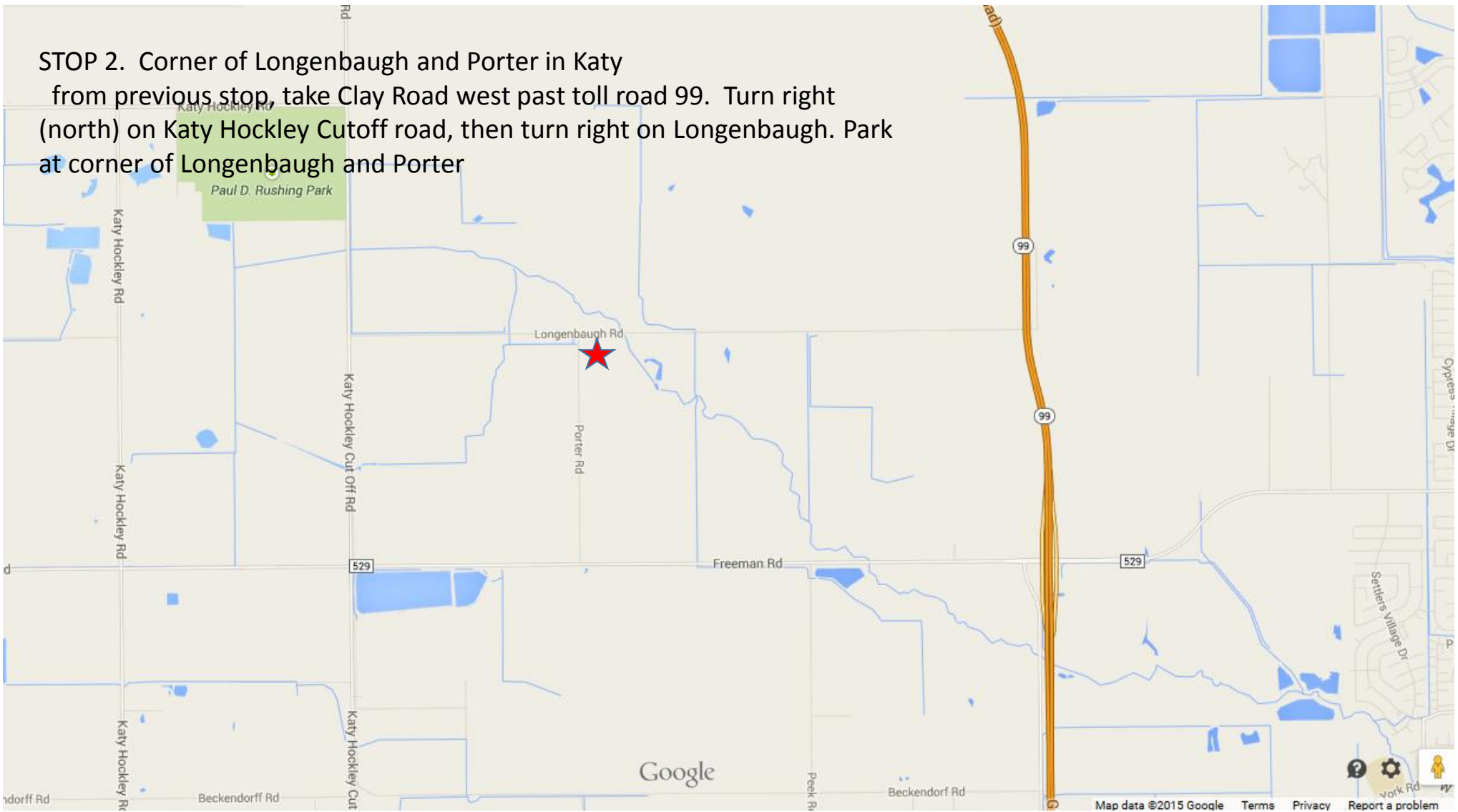
Wikipedia and Audubon Society

**STOP 1: 7 AM at Addicks Reservoir NORTH OF CLAY ROAD**

Take I-10 east; exit Eldridge and go north; continue past Clay road; park on left side of road just before the houses begin



STOP 2. Corner of Longenbaugh and Porter in Katy  
from previous stop, take Clay Road west past toll road 99. Turn right  
(north) on Katy Hockley Cutoff road, then turn right on Longenbaugh. Park  
at corner of Longenbaugh and Porter





Stop 3. Somewhere along Sharp Road.

Stop 4. Jack Road and Warren Ranch

LUNCH at Warren Lake

Stop 5. Field Store Road and Castle (go NW on 290 and get off on Field Store Rd north; road will eventually make a right dog leg. Park at intersection of Field Store and Castle vicinity.

Stop 6. Optional

Bear Creek Park (park at the southern end of the Golbow Road loop)