

WHERE TO FIND SPARROWS IN THE FALL

There are countless fine sparrow localities throughout eastern Massachusetts, each with its own featured group of sparrow visitors. Sparrows can often be found virtually anywhere that suitable cover exists or where appropriate weed seeds abound. In some cases, because of their location on coastal points of land, these spots can trap congregations of sparrows, among which rarities are often found. Many of these areas are discussed in "where-to-go" articles in past issues of Bird Observer as well as in the collected essays of Where To Find Birds in Eastern Massachusetts (BOEM, 1978). The following are brief descriptions and directions to some premier locations and were supplied by Glen d'Entremont, George Gove, Ollie Komar, Wayne Petersen, Martha Reinstein, Robert Stymeister, Lee Taylor and Soheil Zende.

Salisbury Beach State Reservation

From Newburyport go north on Route 1 to Salisbury Center; take a right on Route 1A and follow signs to the reservation. After taking a right on the access road, take another right to reach the campground. Check the thickets on the right and the weedy campground on the left for all the regular migrant sparrows, as well as Lark and Clay-colored sparrows. Later in the fall Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings appear in large flocks. (BOEM 9:1, Richard A. Forster, "Birding Newburyport Harbor and the Salisbury Beach Reservation.") (SZ)

"The Warden's" at Plum Island

This spot is 2.6 miles south from the entrance to the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. The area around the buildings has short stubby grass attractive to all manner of common and uncommon sparrows, including Lark and Clay-colored sparrows and Lark Bunting. (BOEM 7:3, Herman D'Entremont et al, "The Four Seasons at Plum Island - Part II.") (SZ)

The "lime pits" at Peabody

Access is through Cedar Grove Cemetery at the end of Cedar Grove Avenue, off Lynn Street. The "lime pits" became ornithologically famous in 1979 when a tailless Green-tailed Towhee was found here. More common sparrows are always found here in the fall. (BOEM 4:4, Richard S. Heil, "Birds of the Springs Pond Area, Peabody-Salem.") (SZ)

Horn Pond - Woburn

From Route 128, take Route 38 south to the center of Woburn. Turn right on Lexington St., left on Arlington St., then right on Sturgis St. Park on Sturgis at the north end of the pond. Lincoln's, White-throated, Swamp and Song sparrows can be found in the upper area of the lagoon near the bridge over Fowle Brook. Savannah, Field, Chipping and White-crowned sparrows and juncos can be found in the public vegetable gardens and around the cattail marsh. Vesper and Fox sparrows should be looked for along the trails. (GG)

Army Camp - Middlesex Fells - Winchester/Medford

From Route 93, take the Fellsway/Route 28 exit in Medford. The Army Camp is about two miles up South Border Road on the left, just after a curve to the right on an uphill portion of the road. Savannah, Chipping, Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Fox, Lincoln's and Song sparrows, and juncos can be found. (GG)

Lincoln Street Fields - Lexington

From Route 128, take Route 2A toward Lexington. After 0.4 mile, at Lexington Five Corners, turn left onto Lincoln St. About 1/2 mile down some playing and sparrow fields will be on the right. In addition to most of the common sparrows, this area also attracts the scarcer species such as Grasshopper and Lincoln's (after which the street was no doubt named), as well as Vesper Sparrow and Snow Buntings. (LT)

Idylwild Conservation Land - Lexington

From Lexington Five Corners, continue east on 2A for 1/4 mile and take a right onto Middle St. After 0.4 mile the Conservation Area sign and the gate to the community garden plots are on the right. Regularly-occurring sparrows include Song, Tree, White-throated, Chipping, Field, Savannah and White-crowned. (LT)

Dunback Meadow - Lexington

From Route 2 take Waltham St. north 1/2 mile to Brookside Ave. Take a right and park at the Clark Junior High School. Weedy fields and community gardens lie to the east of the schoolgrounds. (BOEM 8:5, John W. Andrews, "Birds of Dunback Meadow.") (LT)

Newton South Marsh

Take Route 9 west from Chestnut Hill two miles to Parker St. Turn left on Parker St., then take the first left onto Hagen Rd. toward Newton South High School. Bear right on Great Meadow Rd., go to the end, then left on Brandeis Rd., still following signs for the high school. Turn right into the first parking lot; park near the back by the baseball diamond. Walk right along the marsh to grassy sparrow fields behind the second baseball diamond. Of eleven species of sparrows noted here in the past two years, Lincoln's, Grasshopper, Vesper and White-crowned are the most noteworthy. (OK)

Winchester Street Gardens - Newton

Take Center St. southwest from Route 9. At the first major intersection, continue straight on Winchester St. After a mile, past the Charles River Golf Course, pass one house on the right, then pull into the next driveway on the right. Follow the driveway down to the left, keep to the right at the first fork, then turn left at the next intersection, after the pavement ends. This road will take you by a small thicket on the right to the first garden plots. A second set of gardens is located farther up on the left. Lincoln's, Grasshopper, Field, Savannah, Chipping, and White-crowned sparrows all occur. (OK)

Fowl Meadow - Milton

Take Route 138 north from Route 128 into Milton. Turn left at the first lights at Brush Hill Road. The entrance is on the left; drive to the end of the road to park. Along the dike can be found Song, Swamp, White-throated, Chipping, Lincoln's and Field sparrows. Walk down past the "crossroad" to the first open area and you might find Lincoln's, Fox, Field and Chipping sparrows. (G d'E)

Squantum - Boston

Take Quincy Shore Drive to East Squantum St. Park at either Maswetuset Hummock on the right, or drive to the Boston Harbor Marina parking lot near the guard shack. At the marsh's edge you might see Sharp-tailed, LeConte's, Grasshopper or Savannah sparrows, and, at the seawall on the north side of the Marina, perhaps a Seaside Sparrow. Walk back along the Marina road to the thickets at the bend of the road, and then into the thickets along the old runways. Possibilities are Chipping, Vesper, Clay-colored, Fox, Lincoln's, White-crowned and Tree sparrows, as well as the more common ones. (G d'E)

Driftway Road and Kent Street - Scituate

From Route 3A directly across from where Route 123 enters from the west, follow Driftway Road until the Scituate Sewage Plant is reached on the right. Park on the road and enter the field just west of the sewer beds for best access to the marsh. A short distance beyond the sewer beds, Old Driftway Road will appear on the right. Follow this a few hundred yards to where Kent St. enters from the left. The large weedy garden plot on the corner of Kent St. can be one of the best sparrow areas on the South Shore. Sharp-tailed and Seaside sparrows are good possibilities along the marsh's edge. (WP)

Bridgewater Correctional Institute - Bridgewater

From Route 18 south of Bridgewater Center, turn left at the entrance to the Correctional Institute and follow the road to the farm fields. A large open hayfield complex criss-crossed with weedy-edged drainage ditches harbors Swamp, Song and Savannah sparrows, and is always apt to have more uncommon species on flight days. (WP)

Cumberland Farm Fields - Halifax

This enormous cornfield complex along Route 105 (Thompson St.) in Halifax and Middleboro is excellent in fall after the corn is cut. Scattered weed patches are left standing, and consequently produce islands for migrant sparrows to collect in. All open country species are likely, and later the open areas have longspurs and Snow Buntings. (WP)

Fort Hill, Cape Cod National Seashore - Eastham

From Route 6 turn right at Fort Hill sign, about 1-1/2 miles north of the Route 6 and Route 28 traffic circle. The road ends at the crest of Fort Hill, which provides a superb view of Nauset Marsh. Walk down to the edge passing a great thicket

with lots of Song and White-throated sparrows as well as an occasional Lincoln's. At the edge of the marsh are many Sharp-taileds and an occasional Seaside Sparrow. The Sharp-tailed breeds here and is especially easy to find at high tide. The fields surrounding the hill provide excellent food supplies for Savannah, Field and Chipping sparrows. (RS)

Marconi Station, Cape Cod National Seashore - South Wellfleet Entrance is on Route 6 in South Wellfleet, about 1-1/2 miles north of Wellfleet Drive-in Theater. Turn right at the traffic light, then left at the sign for Marconi Station. Park at the Administration Building, The fields around this building and the maintenance building are certainly the best in the state for Vesper Sparrow, which nests here. During October and November there are many Chipping, Field and Savannah sparrows as well as an occasional Lark or Clay-colored sparrow. (RS)

Corn Hill - Truro

From Route 6 north of the Truro Center sign, turn left on Corn Hill Road and continue west to the beach parking area. An abandoned railroad bed lies along the edge of a fresh-water marsh which borders the Hillside Farm ("chicken farm" to birders). This is a private farm and permission should be sought before entering. The fields are superb for sparrows, Dickcissels and other specialities like Blue Grosbeak, and Brewer's and Yellow-headed blackbirds. Sparrows are well-represented, with a good chance to find Lincoln's, Lark and Clay-colored. (RS)

Bartlett's Farm - Nantucket

From Main St., take Milk St. until, after about 1/4 mile, it becomes Hummock Pond Rd. Follow this to a road on the left marked "Ocean View Farm," which leads to fields and farmhouses where sparrows and other migrants abound. (BOEM 4:5, Richard R. Veit, "Where to go on Nantucket.") (SZ)



On October 18, 1981, the first annual sparrow survey, organized by Ollie Komar, was conducted in the Greater Boston area. A full report will appear in a later issue, but the preliminary counts showed the following:

Savannah Sparrow	332	Chipping Sparrow	29
"Ipswich" sparrow	3	Field Sparrow	117
Grasshopper Sparrow	1	White-crowned Sparrow	90
Henslow's Sparrow	1	"Gambel's" white-crowned	1
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	11	White-throated Sparrow	233
Vesper Sparrow	2	Fox Sparrow	4
Lark Sparrow	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	14
Dark-eyed Junco	455	Swamp Sparrow	132
Tree Sparrow	5	Song Sparrow	704



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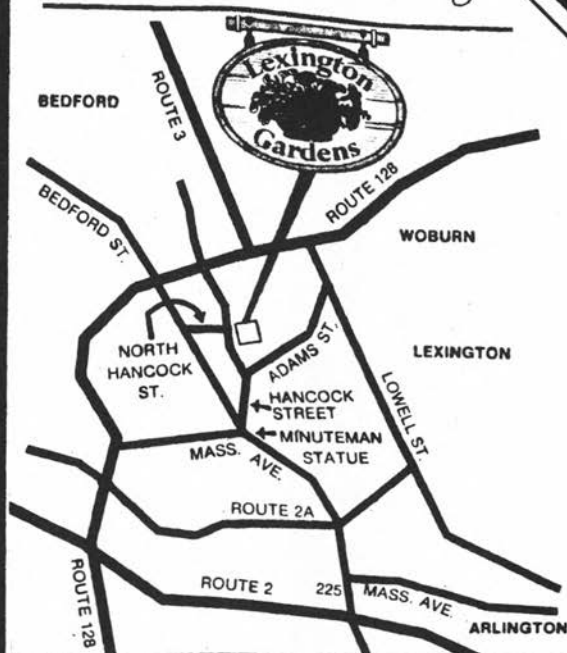
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