

# Saltmarsh Sparrow

*Ammodramus caudacutus*

Family - Emberizidae

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Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow

## State Status:

Special Concern

## Federal Status:

## State Rank:

S3B

## New England Rank:

## Global Rank:

G4

## Reason for Rarity:

This species is endemic to the northeastern U.S. In Maine, it is limited to tidal marshes along the immediate coast from York County through the midcoast region near Rockland. It is a habitat specialist completing its entire life cycle in coastal marshes.

**Factsheet Link:**

FMI:

**Threats:**

Threats include human disturbance and the commercial/residential development of surrounding buffer habitat. Invasive species, including Phragmites is a threat to saltmarsh habitat, especially where tidal flows have been restricted or freshwater runoff has

**Management Recommendations:****Conservation Considerations:**

Conservation of saltmarsh habitat through protection of surrounding upland buffers and managing human disturbance are the most important requirements for management of this species.

**Habitat**

Saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrows use the tidal marsh for their entire life cycle. Nesting just inches off the ground in tidal marshes, they feed, and raise their young in Spartina-dominated high marsh habitat. They often can be found at low tide in the ma

**Range:**

Confined to coastal marshes, the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow breeds from Maine to the Delmarva area in the mid Atlantic region.

**State Distribution:****Global Distribution:**

G4

**General Description:**

This small, compact perching sparrow appears flat-headed, with no neck. Plumage includes thick orange-yellow lines forming an inverted triangle around each gray ear and dark eye. Behind the eye, a brown line pierces this ochre color to connect the eye to the gray nape. A dark cap and whitish throat frame this pattern. Distinct among the brown and black streaks of the upper parts are four jagged, white streaks. The lower parts are mostly whitish, with a little warm color washed over the breast. Thin, dark streaks on the breast extend into the flanks.

**Phenology:**

A variety of foods, mostly insects are taken. They forage within the grassy habitat and are thought to probe for insect larvae and worms in soft mud exposed at low tide.

**Description(s)/Link(s):**

- **MDEP Site Location Law** (large scale development review) requires that developers demonstrate compliance with "no adverse effect on the natural environment" standards for threatened and endangered species habitats potentially including this occurrence.

FMI: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docstand/sitelawpage.htm>

Local land use ordinances offer the greatest potential to protect Maine's natural heritage. See the Beginning with Habitat toolbox for suggestions.

FMI: [http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about\\_toolbox.html](http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html)