

SPARROWS

Bachman's Sparrow

Aimophila aestivalis

Status:	Permanent resident, possibly nests at Grand Bay
Abundance:	Rare
When found:	Year round
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Escatawpa Trail, Bayou Heron Road

Notes: Although common in upland pine flatwood habitats such as the DeSoto National Forest, this species is infrequently seen in the Grand Bay area.



Photo courtesy of Eric Soehren, Alabama DCNR-State Lands Division ©

Henslow's Sparrow

Ammodramus henslowii

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–March
Habitat:	Pine savanna
Best locations:	Coastal Resources Center Savannas, Power Line Right-of-Way

Notes: This species is usually only found in recently burned (within the last three years) grass-dominated pine savannas.



Photo courtesy of Jake Walker ©

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Ammodramus nelsoni

Status:	Winter resident
Abundance:	Fairly common
When found:	October–May
Habitat:	Salt marsh, typically near the beachfront
Best locations:	Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Grand Battures, Point aux Chenes

Notes: A look at this secretive sparrow is well worth the effort required to find it. Prepare to get muddy to find these beauties.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Graves ©



“A fisherman’s report of seven Peregrine Falcons attacking ducks by Bangs Island seemed outlandish, but worth investigation.

When I arrived by boat the next afternoon, a falcon darted after a Horned Grebe I had just flushed. The falcon missed, but when I headed up Bangs Bayou it followed, and attacked each bird scared up by the boat until it caught one. I then knew why the fisherman had mistaken one falcon for seven: This bird had learned to follow boats to help it hunt. For the past three winters, this falcon has provided the most exhilarating birding experiences of my life.”

Jake Walker, Research Technician
Grand Bay NERR



Seaside Sparrow

Ammodramus maritimus

- Status: Permanent resident
Abundance: Common
When found: Year round
Habitat: Salt marsh
Best locations: Bayou Heron Boat Launch, all marsh south of the tree-line

Notes: The best time to find these sparrows is between March and August, when they sing while perched up in the marsh grasses. Their song sounds like a raspy Red-winged Blackbird.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gray, GCBO ©

Swamp Sparrow

Melospiza georgiana

- Status: Winter resident
Abundance: Common
When found: October–April
Habitat: Pine flatwoods and savanna; salt, brackish, and freshwater marsh
Best locations: Bayou Heron Boat Launch, Bayou Heron Road, Hawkes' Marsh, Oak Grove Birding Trail



Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan ©

Notes: This is by far the most common sparrow you will see when birding from the roads and trails.