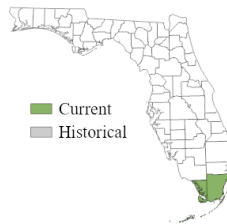


## CAPE SABLE SEASIDE SPARROW

*Ammospiza maritima mirabilis*



**Order:** Passeriformes

**Family:** Passerellidae

**FNAI Ranks:** G4T1/S1

**U.S. Status:** Endangered

**FL Status:** Endangered

**Description:** Similar to the other seaside sparrows (*Ammodramus maritimus*; see species account) but with greenish-gray upperparts and whiter underparts with more distinct streaking. Adults have a yellow patch in front of the eye and a white throat bordered by dark whisker streaks and white jaw-line; yellow at bend of wing less noticeable. Immatures browner and less streaked than adults and lack yellow on head and wing.

**Similar Species:** Swamp sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*), savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), and Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) may occur in the same marshes in winter. Seaside sparrow's yellow patch in front of eye and longer bill helps distinguish it from other sparrows. Because of the bird's restricted range and the difficulty of sparrow identification, an expert should be consulted to confirm any sightings.

**Habitat:** Currently inhabits seasonally inundated freshwater interior marshes within Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve. Formerly occupied brackish marshes in the Cape Sable area of extreme southwest Florida.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Permanent residents. Populations may shift in response to habitat alterations or catastrophic events. Breeds February - August.

**Florida Distribution:** Extreme south and southwest Florida. Scattered populations formerly occurred from Ochopee southeast to Taylor Slough and East Everglades, in Collier, Monroe, and Miami-Dade counties. Now appears to occur mainly in prairies east of Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Same as Florida distribution.

**Conservation Status:** All habitat of the Cape Sable seaside sparrow lies within

## Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow

*Ammospiza maritima mirabilis*

Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve. Estimates in 1981 and 1992 suggested more than 6,000 birds occurred in six areas. Apparent declines began to taken place in 1993, largely attributed to human-induced, wide-scale habitat alterations, including unnatural water regimes, spread of introduced plant species, and drought-related fires. Effect of predators on nesting success is poorly known. Because of its restricted range, the sparrow is also vulnerable to natural catastrophic events such as hurricanes.

**Protection and Management:** Maintain hydrologic regimes suitable for the Cape Sable seaside sparrow. Use prescribed burning where necessary.

**References:** Pimm (ed.) 2000, Poole and Gill (eds.) 1994, Post and Greenlaw 2000, Quay et al. (eds.) 1983, Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Rodgers et al. (eds.) 1996, Stevenson and Anderson 1994.



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