

American Tree Sparrow

Spizella arborea

General Information:

-After nesting near the frigid tundra regions, flocks of these sparrows migrate south and can be found primarily in the United States during the winter. Sometimes traveling in flocks 35-40 birds, but often smaller, they scout out food supplies and willingly come to outdoor feeders. Males often winter farther north than females and juveniles. Males sing during courtship and also to claim territory.

Song:

-Several long clear introductory notes followed by a variable trilled melody. Has a call of *tweedle-eet, tweedle-eet*.

Behavior:

-In pairs on breeding grounds and in flocks in the winter, this relatively tame and conspicuous bird forages for food by scratching on the ground, foliage, or snow. It eats mostly seeds, but also eats insects and caterpillars in the summer, as well as some berries and catkins of willows.



Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 12-13 days by the female. The 1 brood per year of altricial young is brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and stay in the nest of 8-10 days.

Population:

-Fairly common in weedy fields, open areas of brush and scattered trees, groves of small conifers, mixed coniferous- deciduous groves, and marshes.

Conservation:

-This little bird will feed on a mixture of wild birdseed from feeders.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the American Tree Sparrow I would concentrate on planting a mixture of conifers, with some deciduous tree interspersed. Ideal conifers would be the Balsam Fir, White Spruce, Eastern White Pine, Red Pine, Northern White Cedar, and Eastern Red Cedar. I would then plant a mixture of Winterberry, Snowberry, High-bush Cranberry, and Sandbar Willow. For deciduous trees I would stress the Weeping Willow, Yellow Birch, Paper Birch, and River Birch.