

White-throated Sparrow

Zonotrichia albicollis

General Information:

-The song of the White-throated sparrow is heard in the Canadian wilderness and in the northeastern US where it breeds in woodland undergrowth, clearings, and gardens. Distinguishing marks include a broad yellow eyebrow, which tapers to either white or tan, and a sharply outlined white throat. Although it is common and widespread, sightings of this bird are rare in the West.

Song:

-A thin whistle, starting with 2 single notes followed by 3 triple notes: *Poor Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody* or *Pure Sweet Canada, Canada, Canada*.

Behavior:

-Solitary or in pairs, this little bird hops on the ground or forages for food in shrubs or trees. Scratches among the leaves for food and eats mostly weed seeds, fruits from trees, tree buds, and insects. May hawk insect in midair.



Breeding:

-Monogamous and solitary.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 11-14 days by the female. The 1-2 broods per year of altricial young are brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and stay in the nest for 7-12 days.

Population:

-Common and widespread in conifer and mixed conifer forests, forest edges and clearings, and thickets.

Conservation:

-An uncommon host to cowbird parasitism that is vulnerable to habitat loss due to logging. I truly believe that you will like this little songbird's song!

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the White-throated Sparrow on your shoreland property I suggest concentrating on coniferous trees. When I am fishing on Pelican Lake, there is always a spot where I can hear these little birds calling, and that spot has a lot of conifers. I suggest planting a mixture of Balsam Fir, White Spruce, Tamarack, Red Pine, and Eastern White Pine. Then I would plant some berry producing shrubs in an area where they will get a lot of sun. For wildflowers I would concentrate on Cup-Plant, Prairie Dock, Compass Plant, Ironweed, Blazingstars, and Wild Bergamot. I also encourage the planting of emergent aquatic vegetation.