



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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Henslow's Sparrow *Ammodramus henslowii*

State Status: **Endangered**
Federal Status: **None**

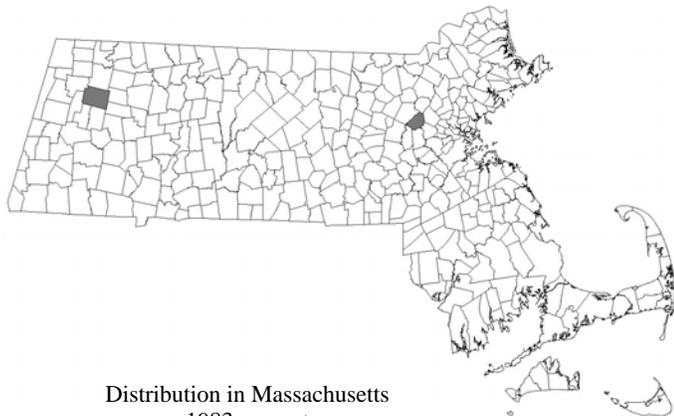
DESCRIPTION: The Henslow's Sparrow is a small (4.5 in. long) bird. Its dull olive-green head contrasts with a reddish-brown back and a necklace of dark streaks on the breast. This sparrow is usually found low in the grass and relies on running rather than flying. Its song is an insect-like "tslick", perhaps the poorest vocal effort of any of the songbirds.

RANGE: Eastern South Dakota to southern Maine and New Hampshire and south to eastern Kansas and North Carolina. This species winters in southeastern United States.

DISTRIBUTION IN MASSACHUSETTS: Occurs (sometimes unpredictably) in only a few, widely scattered locations throughout the state.



Henslow's Sparrow, Bull & Farrand, Jr., 1977



Distribution in Massachusetts
1983-current

Based on records in Natural Heritage Database

HABITAT: Henslow's Sparrows inhabit open fields where vegetation is comprised of a dense growth of grass, weeds, or clover. Some scattered shrubs may be present but extensive shrubby growth makes fields unsuitable. Wet meadows are most often the preferred habitat, although drier areas may be selected. The nests are constructed of woven grass on the ground, usually in a grass clump.

POPULATION STATUS: Henslow's Sparrows are considered rare and declining in Massachusetts and throughout much of its range in the East.

LIMITING FACTORS: Decline is largely due to habitat destruction, through wetland drainage or loss of open grassland habitat to urbanization or forest succession.

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