



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Field Sparrow  
*Spizella pusilla***

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

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** A small bird, the Field Sparrow has an unstreaked rufous cap, streaked brown back, clear light or buffy underparts, and a short tail. The bill and legs are pink. The sexes are alike in appearance.

**DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE:** Data on specific locations of breeding Field Sparrows are not recorded by the NHESP. The North American Breeding Bird Survey indicates a declining Massachusetts population trend of -6.1% annually from 1966-2003 (Sauer et al. 2004). Data recorded during the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (1974-1979) confirmed breeding by Field Sparrows in about 17% of the areas surveyed. Field Sparrows were recorded across the state, with no obvious concentrations in a particular part of Massachusetts (Petersen and Meservey 2003).

**HABITAT DESCRIPTION:** Field Sparrows inhabit old fields, pastures, and the edges of woods, including powerline rights-of-way. They prefer areas of grass interspersed with shrubs or small trees, tending to avoid both grasslands devoid of woody vegetation and wooded areas without significant grassy openings.

**THREATS:** In Massachusetts, Field Sparrows are threatened largely by the conversion of their preferred habitat to development, to later-successional woodlands, or to intensive agriculture.

**REFERENCES:**

- Petersen, W.R., and W.R. Meservey. 2003. *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas*. Massachusetts Audubon Society and University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Massachusetts.
- Sauer, J.R., J.E. Hines, and J. Fallon. 2004. *The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2003. Version 2004.1*. USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.

*Updated 2015*

***A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan***

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife**

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Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

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