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# Conserving South Carolina's **At-Risk Species:**

## Species facing threats to their survival

### MacGillivray's seaside sparrow (Ammodramus maritimus macgillivraii)



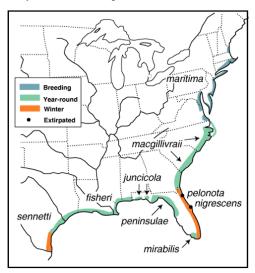
MacGillivray's seaside sparrow/ www.biologicaldiversity.org

### **Description**

Upper parts are dark grayish; birds have a County. noticeable yellow streak in front of the eye. White throat is bordered by dark **Status** whisker streaks and white to buffy jaw- The MacGillivray's seaside sparrow is des- Post, W. and S.A. Gauthreaux. 1989. line; yellow at bend of wing less noticea- ignated as a high priority landbird by Status and distribution of South Carolina ble. Breeding season in South Carolina is South Carolina Partners in Flight (PIF) birds. Contributions from the Charleston May-June.

### Range

very narrow strip of salt and brackish Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) was



Rangewide, the species occurs from Dare from coastal development and loss of haband Nassau Counties in Florida.

### **Habitat**

MacGillivray's seaside sparrows are found losses due to coastal storm events have exclusively in salt and brackish marshes been documented. Nest predation is also consisting of cord grasses (Spartina spp.), an important consideration as its intensity true rushes (Juncus spp.), and bulrushes is often related to changes in water levels. (Scirpus spp.). In order to avoid extreme tidal fluctuations, seaside sparrows move Management/Protection Needs up estuaries to nest. Significant numbers Actions needed to manage and protect occur in black needle-rush (Juncus romeria- existing populations of MacGillivray's nus) marshes at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife seaside sparrow consist of: maintaining The MacGillivray's seaside sparrow is a Center, Cape Romain National Wildlife current regulations/statutes protecting large dark sparrow of coastal marshes, Refuge, and other areas featuring exten- tidal wetlands; restoration of ditched and olive-gray to olive-brown in coloration, sive coastal marsh. Breeding has also been altered marshes (where possible); predawith a long bill and sharp, pointed tail. documented as far inland as Berkeley tor control; supporting survey efforts;

and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture's— Museum 18. 83 pp. South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative (SAMBI) but is not currently protected by In South Carolina, the species occupies a the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. petitioned in April 2010 to list the species and published a 90-day finding in September 2011 indicating that listing may be warranted. The Service will be making a 12-month finding on the species by September 2018.

### **Threats**

Past threats to seaside sparrow populations were salt marsh ditching for mosquito control and pesticide spraying. Altered water regimes allow for the encroachment of undesirable vegetation in higher sections of salt marshes, degrading seaside sparrow habitat. Current and future chal-

marsh along the Outer Coastal Plain. lenges to the species consist of impacts County, North Carolina south to Duval itat due to sea level rise. Studies modeling habitat change due to accelerating sea level rise consistently predict substantial loss of salt marsh habitats. Population

education.

### References

Post, William, and J. S. Greenlaw. 2009. Sparrow (Ammodramus maritimus), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/ bna/species/127

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources—State Wildlife Action Plan: 2010-2015.

### Contact

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