This sparrow is named not for its looks or how it sounds, but where it can be found. The songs are an understated wheeze, but far more complex than our ears can readily detect. Here’s an opportunity to explore and enjoy an hour of early morning singing by one male. I love the subtle complexities of these songs. Immerse yourself and you’ll come away with a whole new appreciation for these birds. Jump around as you wish, but perhaps it makes most sense to listen in the order that I provide. June 8, 2012. Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newburyport, Massachusetts. Sunrise 5:05 a.m. (1:11:51)

♫698. This seaside sparrow routinely sings four different songs, but our ears are challenged to appreciate the differences. Here they are, excerpted from the much longer recording provided below. Let’s letter the four songs A, B, C, and D. (0:16)

Play-698

♫699. Here are those same four songs, but at one-quarter normal speed. More details can now be heard, but it takes a good auditory memory to remember the differences from one song to the next. Want to hear these songs at even slower speeds? You know how to do that—import into Raven Lite and play. I personally like one-eighth speed. (0:36)

Play-699

♫700. Here are the best 15 minutes that I recorded from this male. In these roughly 180 songs (I didn’t count!) are six series of songs: first a series of A, then B, then C, D, A, and B. Be attentive at the following five times if you wish to challenge yourself to hear him switch to a new song: 0:41, 3:28, 5:42, 7:18, 13:08. (15:04)

Play-700

♫701. Here’s the real deal, a glimpse into the kind of listening experience I cherish. On this June 8, local sunrise was at 5:05 a.m., and it took me a while to find and get onto my bird, so I was somewhat disappointed that I didn’t begin recording him until 4:48 a.m.—I probably missed his first half hour of singing. Nevertheless, I continued for an hour and 12 minutes, until 6:00 a.m. At 1 hour and 3 minutes, I announce, “There’s a good hour in the life of this seaside sparrow . . .” Just before an hour and 10 minutes, I announce, “OK, I need a break. I can’t hold this parabola any longer . . .” Here is the largely unedited file from which the previous three recordings were taken. It’s a little rough in places, and a neighboring seaside sparrow comes close to sing, but always, I believe, the focal bird is in the foreground of the recording.

Play-701