Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni*

Most of the population of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow migrates from central Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, but a few birds reach the coast of California. Here they are found in coastal salt marshes almost invariably. The birds seldom expose themselves outside the cover of dense vegetation, especially pickleweed. Birders have learned to look for them as they look for rails, during the winter's highest tides, when high water floods them out and forces them to the marsh's edge.


**Migration:** Extreme dates for this species in San Diego County are 8 October and 27 February.

**Taxonomy:** The split of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow into two species (AOU 1995) has still left Nelson's with three component subspecies. Nominate *A. n. nelsoni* Allen, 1875, is the one occurring in California. See Sibley (1996) for details on its identification.