

### Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii*

From a breeding range in the northern Great Plains, Sprague's Pipit migrates for the winter to the south-central United States and mainland Mexico. In California it occurs primarily as a rare fall vagrant, though the introduction of Bermuda grass to the Imperial Valley as a major crop may enable small numbers to winter there, as seen in 1997–98 and 2002–03.

**Migration:** The California Bird Records Committee has accepted only four records of Sprague's Pipit from San Diego County. Three are from the Tijuana River valley: up to three birds in an alfalfa field 19–27 October 1974, McCaskie (1975), SDNHM 38980; one in a pasture 22 November 1974 (Luther et al. 1979); one in a field of bare dirt 22 November 1977 (Binford 1985). One is from weedy brush on Fiesta Island, Mission Bay (Q8), 19 December 1977 (Luther et al. 1983). The committee rejected two later reports.



Photo by John S. Luther

**Conservation:** Like many birds of native prairie, Sprague's Pipit is on the decline. Changing land use in the Tijuana River valley has eliminated dense but low vegetation like alfalfa that Sprague's Pipits seek.