

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

The Swamp Sparrow lives mainly east of the Rocky Mountains but is a regular rare fall migrant and winter visitor to California. It is well named, for it seeks freshwater marshes and the undergrowth of riparian woodland.

Winter: The Swamp Sparrow is an annual visitor to San Diego County. The atlas period 1997–2002 was rather meager for the species, with only seven reported. Three per year is more typical. All wintering Swamp Sparrows have been found in the coastal lowland except for one at Lake Henshaw (G17) 20 February 1979 (AB 33:317, 1979). Typical sites are San Elijo Lagoon (L7; 1 April 2000, M. B. Mulrooney), San Dieguito Valley (M8; 28 December 1997, P. Unitt), Santee Lakes (P12; 9 February



Photo by Kenneth Z. Kurland

2000, J. C. Worley), Lindo Lake (P14; 17 January–18 February 2002, M. B. Mulrooney), and the Dairy Mart Pond, Tijuana River valley (V11; 1–11 January 2000, G. McCaskie). The maximum seen in one area is four in the Tijuana River valley 18 January 1964 (G. McCaskie); nine were seen countywide that winter. December 1990 yielded two on the Oceanside Christmas bird count and five on the San Diego count.

Migration: Fall migrants have been noted a few times in atypical habitat such as Point Loma (S7). The only record for the Anza–Borrego Desert is of one at the Borrego sewage ponds (H25) 9 November 1997 (P. D. Jorgensen). Dates for the Swamp Sparrow in San Diego County

extend from 13 October (1957, near Lakeside, P14, AFN 12:60, 1958) to 11 April (1975, O'Neill Lake, E6, A. Fries), except for the single known spring vagrant, singing along the San Diego River in Mission Valley (R9) 30 May 1992 (P. Unitt, AB 46:482, 1992).

Taxonomy: The two specimens from San Diego County, from the east end of Sweetwater Reservoir (S13) 4 November 1943 (SDNHM 18759) and the Tijuana River valley 12 February 1964 (SDNHM 35080), are *M. g. ericrypta* Oberholser, 1938, which breeds in the northern part of the species' range, through the boreal forest of Canada.