



## Saving the SaltMarsh Sparrow from Extinction



Saltmarsh Sparrow by Ray Hennessy\_Shutterstock

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that was founded in 1994 with a mission to conserve wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. One of ABC's priority areas is the protection of migratory birds – species that can travel thousands of miles seasonally between breeding and nonbreeding grounds. For more than 25 years, ABC has worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a wide range of partners to support several Migratory Bird Joint Ventures – multi-organizational partnerships working at the regional level to deliver conservation results for birds, other wildlife, and people.

One of the Joint Ventures with whom we closely partner is the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV), a regional partnership that is comprised of 16 state wildlife agencies from Maine to Florida and the territory of Puerto Rico; federal and regional habitat conservation agencies; and other organizations that share a unified conservation vision. The partnership is currently focused on one of the most imperiled habitats in the ACJV region – coastal marshes and the suite of vulnerable birds that depend on them, such as the Saltmarsh Sparrow. The Saltmarsh Sparrow is a tidal marsh songbird and the only bird species endemic to the ACJV; it is found nowhere else on earth.

Saltmarsh Sparrow population declines are severe; more than four out of every five Saltmarsh Sparrows have disappeared since 1998 – an estimated population decline of 87%. This decline is due to historic losses and degradation of salt marsh habitat, as well as accelerated sea level rise across Atlantic Coast salt marshes. High tides and storm surges are increasingly flooding saltmarsh sparrow nests and their high marsh habitat. When nests flood, chicks may drown or eggs may float away. Low reproductive success is the primary reason the saltmarsh sparrow population continues to drop.

The ACJV is coordinating a multi-agency effort to successfully restore the population of Saltmarsh Sparrows. Their approach is to restore and enhance at least 84,000 acres of existing salt marshes to provide high-quality nesting habitat and to protect adjacent, inland areas to allow marshes to migrate as

sea levels rise. If successful, the full suite of tidal marsh specialist birds will benefit as well. The ACJV and our partners have identified priority salt marshes within each state that are good candidates for restoration, enhancement, and/or management. See Image below.

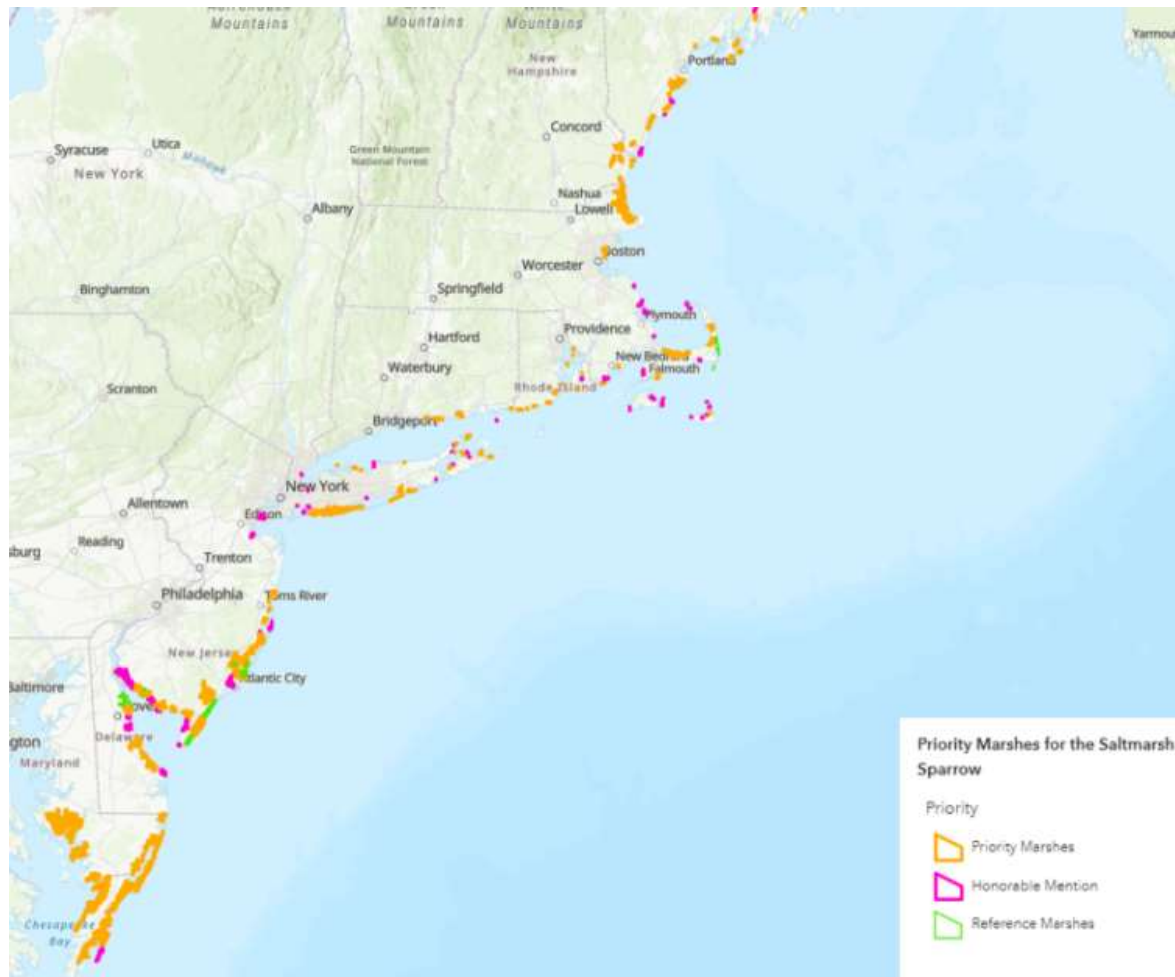


Image. Priority marshes for the Saltmarsh Sparrow in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

Funds raised from the 2026 Brooklyn Bird Birdathon could support the ACJV and their efforts to protect the Saltmarsh Sparrow in one of the following ways:

- **Conceptual design and implementation for coastal marsh restoration:** Support to conceptualize, design, and implement restoration work to support sparrows
- **Monitoring of restoration sites:** Better document sparrow populations at sites before and after restoration occurs to learn from efforts and adapt approaches in the future to best support the sparrow.

- **Improving infrastructure and signage at high-priority locations:** Create public opportunities to learn about Saltmarsh Sparrows is integral to increasing awareness and knowledge of this species' needs.

Thank your support of bird conservation!