

Notes on the Black Seaside Finch (*Ammodramus nigrescens*).—Doubtless no bird breeding in North America has a briefer history than has the Black Seaside Finch. Discovered in 1872 by Mr. C. J. Maynard at Salt Lake, near Titusville, Florida, and in the marshes of Merritt's Island and south of Dummitt's Grove on the opposite side of the Indian River, it has apparently been met with by no other ornithologist, and the sum of our knowledge concerning this interesting species is contained in Mr. Maynard's 'Birds of Eastern North America.'

In March, 1889, I looked for *Ammodramus nigrescens* very carefully on the evidently favorable marshes near 'Oak Lodge' on the east peninsula of Indian River, some fifty miles south of the point where Mr. Maynard found it, but without success.

Returning to the Indian River in March, 1898, I determined to continue the search for this bird and securing a small sloop sailed from Titusville on March 2, for the mouth of Dummitt's Creek. Two days were passed at this point and *Ammodramus nigrescens* was found to be a very common inhabitant of the adjoining marshes. Heavy rains prevented me from spending more than five hours in the marshes where, nevertheless, under the most unfavorable conditions seventeen specimens were secured, evidencing the abundance of the bird.

The marshes here are covered with well-defined areas of a low branching, matted grass, and a tall, single-stalked reedy grass, while along the shores of the river, creek, and marsh ponds there is a fringe of bushy sedge (*Borrichia frutescens*). The Finches were found in the tall grass and in the sedge. They were not in song and the sexual organs of the specimens secured exhibited but little signs of enlargement, showing that the breeding season was not yet at hand.

Savanna and Swamp Sparrows were also common in these marshes. The paler color and darting, more extended flight of the former at once distinguished them from *nigrescens*, but the Swamp Sparrows were not so easily identified. One soon learned, however, to recognize *nigrescens* by its darker color and by its flight, which was shorter and more hesitating than that of the Swamp Sparrow.

Like the Seaside Finch (*Ammodramus maritimus*), *nigrescens* appears to possess considerable curiosity and could often be made to mount to the grass-tops by 'squeaking.'

Mr. Maynard states that the birds were doubtless breeding in the latter part of April and that he believes them to be migratory, wintering, probably, at some more southern point.

Their abundance, and the fact that they have been found at no other locality, in connection with their occurrence in numbers so long before the breeding season, would tend to disprove this theory, and in my opinion *Ammodramus nigrescens* will be found to be a permanent resident species.
—FRANK M. CHAPMAN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*



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