

Second, third, and fourth quills longest, first and fifth equal; tail graduated. Upper part of the head with a central bluish-grey streak, deep brown at the sides, with the feathers black in the centre; hind neck dull grey, tinged with brown; back brown, tinged with grey, some of the feathers marked with black and edged with greyish-white; quills dusky brown, edged with reddish-brown, the secondary and smaller coverts with their outer webs chiefly of the latter colour; tail-feathers dusky brown, margined with greyish-olive; a broad band of light yellowish-red from the base of the upper mandible over the eye, and extending beyond the middle of the neck, where it is broader; ear-coverts grey; a broad band of yellowish-red from the lower mandible down the neck; throat whitish, with a line of dusky streaks on each side; the lower part of the neck, a portion of the breast, the lower tail-coverts, and the sides, pale yellowish-red, streaked with dusky; the rest of the lower parts white.

Male, 5, $7\frac{1}{4}$.

SWAMP SPARROW.

† *AMMODRAMUS PALUSTRIS*, *Wils.*

PLATE CLXXV.—MALE.

The shores and such flat sand-bars as are overgrown with grasses and rank weeds, along the Mississippi, from its mouth to a great height, as well as the swamps that occur in the woods, within a short distance from the margins of that river, are the resorts of the Swamp Sparrow, during autumn and winter. Although these birds do not congregate in flocks, their numbers are immense. They form the principal food of the many Sparrow Hawks, Pigeon Hawks, and Hen-harriers, which follow them as well as several other species, on their return from the Middle Districts, where they go towards spring, for the purpose of breeding. In those districts they continue to prefer low swampy places, damp meadows, and the margins of creeks and rivers.

It is a timid species, destitute of song, and merely uttering a single *cheep*, which is now and then heard during the day, but more frequently towards evening. They skulk along the weeds with activity, and feed principally upon the seeds of grasses, with a few insects, sometimes wading in shallow



A. T.

Swamp Sparrow.

Male.

May-apple

water. When wounded and forced to fall in the stream, they swim off to the nearest tuft of grass and hide in it. Their flight is short, low, and assisted by strong jerking motions of the body and tail, accompanied by a rustling of the wings. They alight by dropping suddenly amongst the weeds, seldom making towards a high tree. They are rarely if ever met with in dry woodlands.

Their nest is placed on the ground, at the foot of a large bunch of tall grass. It is composed of dry weeds and finer fibres of the same, and is sometimes partially covered over. The eggs are four or five, of a dull white, speckled with reddish. They raise two, sometimes three, broods in a season.

I found these birds abundantly dispersed in the swamps of Cayuga Lake, and those bordering the Illinois river, during summer, and far up the Arkansas river in the winter months. Their flesh is sedgy, which perhaps forms no objection to some people against its use. They become fat and tender, when the weeds have produced an abundance of seeds. Their note differs from that of all other species of Sparrow, being harsher in its tone. The young follow the parents on the ground, skulking among the grass for nearly a week before they are able to fly.

This bird is abundant, in company with the Tree Sparrow, during winter, about Boston. It is not mentioned by Dr. RICHARDSON as being an inhabitant of the Fur Countries, although I found it plentiful in Labrador and Newfoundland, as well as in all the districts suited to its habits between these countries and the Texas. Mr. TOWNSEND informs me that it is found on the Missouri, but was not observed beyond the head-waters of that river.

From Texas to North Carolina in winter. Spreads in spring and summer to the Missouri westward, and to Labrador eastward. Abundant.

SWAMP SPARROW, *Fringilla palustris*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. iii. p. 49.

FRINGILLA PALUSTRIS, Bonap. Syn., p. 110.

SWAMP SPARROW, *Fringilla Georgiana*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 502.

SWAMP SPARROW, *Fringilla palustris*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 331; vol. v. p. 508.

Male.

Bill shorter than in the other species; tail-feathers less acuminate; upper part of head deep chestnut-red, streaked with black; hind part and sides of the neck light bluish-grey, cheeks dusky brown; a greyish-yellow streak over the eye; upper parts of body yellowish-brown, streaked with brownish-black; wing-coverts and secondaries broadly edged with yellowish-red, primaries with duller red; tail similar; throat greyish-white, with two small dusky streaks, the rest of the fore neck and part of the breast pale bluish-grey, the abdomen whitish, the sides yellowish-brown, streaked with dusky.

Male, $5\frac{1}{2}$, $7\frac{1}{2}$.

The plant on which you see this bird is called the *May-apple*. It shoots from the ground in great numbers, and grows very close. The flowers appear at an early season, and are succeeded by a pulpy yellowish fruit, about the size of a pullet's egg, and which, when ripe, is pleasant to the taste, being a little acid and very cooling.

GENUS VI.—PEUCÆA, *Aud.* PINEWOOD-FINCH.

Bill of moderate length, rather stout, straight, considerably compressed, acute; upper mandible with the dorsal line somewhat convex, the ridge rather narrow, the sides convex, the edges inflected, with the notches obsolete, the tip acute; lower mandible with the angle short and rounded, the dorsal line ascending and slightly convex, the ridge rounded, the sides convex, the edges involute, the tip acute. Nostrils small, roundish, partially concealed by the plumage. Head ovate; neck short; body moderately stout. Tarsus rather short, compressed, with seven scutella; toes moderate, very slender, hind toe rather large, lateral toes about equal, outer adherent at the base. Claws of moderate length, very slender, extremely compressed, arched, tapering to a fine point. Plumage very soft, blended. Wings very short, convex, rounded, the third and fourth quills longest, the first and seventh about equal. Tail rather long, graduated, of twelve narrow rounded feathers. No difference in the colours of the sexes. Name from *πέυκη*, a pine.



A. T.

Swamp Sparrow.

Male.

May-apple



Audubon, John James. 1841. "Swamp Sparrow, Ammodramus Palustris, Wils. [Pl. 175]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 3, 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319288>.

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