

[Wings Over Florida Bird Program](#)

Thanks for subscribing to receive Wings Over Florida bulletins from the Wildlife Viewing Section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Each quarter, we will be sending out a seasonal highlight bulletin, which we hope will inform and encourage you to head outdoors and enjoy the birds and wildlife Florida has to offer.

Winter Sparrows

Millions of birds migrate to Florida in the fall. Some of them stay for a while before continuing south to the Caribbean Islands and South America BUT, many will remain in Florida for the winter. We are often asked, “Where can I go to see winter sparrows in Florida?”

Head to the [Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area](#) in the panhandle for these skulky winter visitors. The [Old Agricultural Fields](#) in Wewahitchka in Gulf County provide habitat for as many as 10 different species of sparrow including White-throated, White-crowned, Vesper, Field, Grasshopper, Swamp and Savannah. Lucky birders may find a Le Conte’s or Henslow’s Sparrow.

The [Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve \(GTMNERR\)](#) in Saint John’s County provides winter habitat for two of the toughest sparrows to find and identify; Nelson’s and Saltmarsh Sparrows ([Flickr ID guide](#)). Ask at the visitor center for information on where to look for the sparrows.

Heading to Gainesville this winter? If yes, be sure to visit [Payne’s Prairie Preserve State Park](#), one of the best all-around birding sites in the southeastern US. Sparrowing at the prairie can be very rewarding. Hike the La Chua trail for a chance to see White-crowned, Vesper, Grasshopper, Song and Swamp Sparrows. A Lincoln’s Sparrow has been spotted this winter and 8 years ago a Harris’s Sparrow was present, attracting birders from all over the state.

South Florida doesn’t attract as big a variety of sparrows as the rest of Florida but it can be rewarding if you go to the right sites. One such site is [Frog Pond Wildlife Management Area](#) or “Lucky Hammock”, as it is most commonly referred to by local birders. Both Grasshopper and Lincoln’s Sparrows have been spotted at this site this winter, and in past years species such as Clay-colored and Lark Sparrow have been recorded. Be sure to check out the nearby [Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area](#) as well.

There are of course many other [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#) sites that provide inviting habitat for wintering sparrows. In the coming months we will share more information on where you can find them AND other winter birds in our monthly newsletter [Kite Tales](#), and on [Facebook](#).

Other Wings Over Florida news

- Join us in the Florida Keys on February 12th for a [Wings Over Florida field trip](#) at the Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area on Sugarloaf Key.
- We finished creating all [510 individual trail site webpages](#) in November.
- You can now see the latest [Top 30 Florida bird](#) sightings via our Latest eBird Sightings button.
- Our NEW [Checklist of Florida Butterflies](#) is now available online.