

# Fox Sparrow (FOSP)

*Passerella iliaca*



Slate-colored Fox Sparrow on a branch.



Red Fox Sparrow on snow.

## Characteristics

- Large, chunky sparrow with a stout beak, and medium-length tail
- Length: 15-19 cm
- Weight: 26-44 g
- Wingspan: 26.7-29 cm
- Not sexually dimorphic
- The four Western subspecies of Fox Sparrow mainly a gray or sooty brown color

## Habitat

- Each subspecies have vegetation preference
- Red Fox Sparrows prefer scrubby woods and forest edges
- Sooty Fox Sparrows are found in deciduous thickets near streams
- Large-billed Fox Sparrows prefer high elevation brushy fields
- Slate-colored Fox Sparrows favor dense riparian

## Behavior

- Can be seen hopping on the ground foraging for seeds and insects by scratching fallen leaves
- In spring, males defend nesting territory by singing
- Nests built by females on ground under dense, low shrubs
- Migrate from high elevation areas in the summer to lower elevation in the winter



Thick-billed Fox Sparrow with food in the beak.



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## Diet

- Mainly eat insects, spiders, millipedes, mollusks, seeds, fruits, or plant buds
- Eat a more balanced diet of plants and insects in migration and winter

## Zzyzx-Specific Information

- Slate-colored Fox Sparrow are a non-breeding winter resident
- Red and Sooty Fox Sparrows are rarely seen
- Thick-billed Fox Sparrows migrate through Zzyzx
- Often seen with other sparrow species

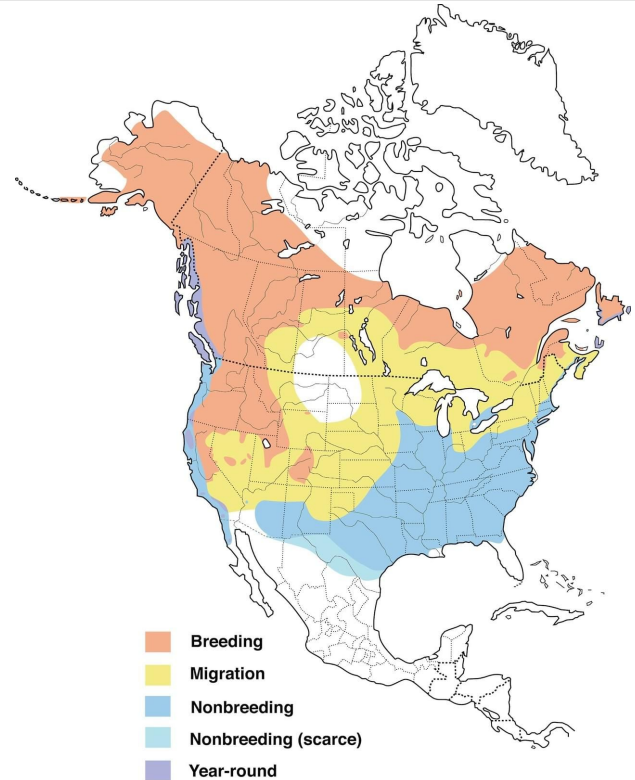
## Conservation Status

- IUCN Status for all subspecies: Least concern, stable
- Populations have declined
- Logging and forest fires have increased their habitat in the West

## Did you know?!

- The oldest fossils of fox sparrow found were from the Pleistocene Era, which was 11,000 years ago
- Fox sparrow parents will lure predators and humans away from young by pretending to have a broken wing, and chirping

## Range



[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Fox\\_Sparrow/maps-range](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Fox_Sparrow/maps-range)



[https://www.pointblue.org/palmarin\\_blog/point-blue-conservation-science-monthly-banding-summary-september-2019/](https://www.pointblue.org/palmarin_blog/point-blue-conservation-science-monthly-banding-summary-september-2019/)

Information about Fox Sparrows were retrieved from Allaboutbirds website, Audobon website, Jason Wallace, IUCN Red List Website, and *Sibley Birds West* by David Allen Sibley.

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