

Research Snapshot: Early Birds

Protecting tidal marsh sparrows from sea level rise

Monday, August 29, 2022



On the edge of Great Bay at dawn, associate professor of natural resources and the environment [Adrienne Kovach](#) (right), master's student Talia Kuras (left), and undergraduate researcher Margaret Yates '23 walk carefully through a tidal marsh in Stratham, N.H. to study the tiny birds that live there.

"We are researching tidal marsh sparrows – birds that nest in tidal salt marshes – which are threatened by sea-level rise," says Kovach. In summer 2022, she and her [research team](#) visited marshes throughout New Hampshire to determine if tidal marsh

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sparrows are present; their findings will help inform efforts to prioritize salt marshes for restoration. They also monitored nests and banded individual birds on select marshes in New Hampshire and southern Maine, tracking the birds' nesting success and long-term survival and collecting genetic data and behavioral observations such as mating behavior, plumage characteristics and diet. "Ultimately," says Kovach, "we are interested in understanding how these sparrows are adapted to living in the harsh environment of the salt marsh."

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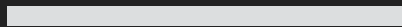
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