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## Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

The Chipping Sparrow is a common winter visitor to north and central Florida and, occasionally, south Florida. Most often seen in small flocks of 20 to 50 birds, they sometimes give the impression of brown leaves in a gust of wind along the side of the road. They are one of the most widely distributed of American bird species and breed from southeastern Alaska east all the way to southwestern Newfoundland and south to Baja California, Nicaragua, and the Gulf coast (AOU 1983).

The Chipping Sparrow inhabits the edges of woods, roadsides, weedy fields, pastures and fencerows, and suburban yards. Its diet is primarily weed seeds (60%) and insects (40%) (Sprunt 1954).

Nests are located in small shrubs or trees, usually evergreens, and are constructed of grasses and almost invariably lined with horsehair. The 3 to 5 greenish-blue eggs, speckled with black or purple, are incubated 11 to 14 days, and nestlings fledge in about 10 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Migration peaks for this bird are April and November.

Stevenson and Anderson (1994) reviewed the history of Chipping Sparrow breeding in Florida, with the first record in 1912 south of Tallahassee and occasional sightings since 1941 throughout the Panhandle. No confirm breeding was found during the Atlas period, but 8 "possibles" and 1 "probable" were reported from Taylor Cour westward to Santa Rosa County.

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