

## **Bird Notes for Hikers April 18, 2020**

I'm Stew Hamill, a professional Wildlife Biologist and a Naturalist. I maintain a database of wildlife that I see, and I keep track of when birds return to my property. This is not only a running long-term record of return dates, but it tells me if some bird does not return.

This edition of Bird Notes for Hikers covers sparrows – difficult to see, difficult to identify by sight, but with distinctive voices. This time of year they are a little easier to see due to bare branches, but no easier to identify by sight. It would be helpful to do an online search for photos and songs of these species before you go out on your walk.

They are returning one by one just now to their respective habitats:

**Field Sparrow** (shrubby fields),

**White-throated Sparrow** (woodlands),

**Chipping Sparrow** (yards),

**Swamp Sparrow** (swamps).

The **American Tree Sparrow** has been here all winter at feeders. It will be leaving soon to go back north to breed. It will be replaced by the Chipping Sparrow in yards and along roadsides. They look very similar but the Tree Sparrow has a breast spot while the Chipping Sparrow doesn't. Their voices are very different.

The **Fox Sparrow** is just passing through on its way farther north. It is reddish (hence the name), boldly streaked underneath, and quite shy, but has a loud whistle-like song.

Enjoy the sounds out in the fresh air, and see what you can find.