

In the **At a Glance** photo for June, we see what appears to be a rather small, plump, short-tailed sparrow or finch of some kind. The presence of prominent ventral streaks, extending well down onto the flanks, readily eliminates all of the plain-breasted sparrows. Likewise, the short tail considerably reduces the sparrow options, with only the Savannah Sparrow being a viable candidate. A close examination, however, should lead the viewer away from the Savannah Sparrow as a possibility. The pictured bird clearly shows a single bold wing bar and at least the suggestion of a second and lesser bar above it. These features, along with what appears to be an especially fine-pointed bill and relatively short tarsi, should remove the Savannah Sparrow from further consideration.

At this point, we must conclude that the bird is most likely one of two small striped "winter finches" -- either a Pine Siskin or a Common Redpoll. The Hoary Redpoll typically lacks heavy streaking on the flanks and undertail coverts. Further scrutiny of the folded left wing reveals a pale marking or slash below the lower wing bar. Could this be the partially concealed yellow wing stripe of a Pine Siskin? A look at the head gives us the answer. The chin, which is readily observed in the photograph, is clearly light, not black, and the crown appears to have fine streaks on it, rather than being uniformly colored the way it is in a redpoll. Thus by considering the combination of streaked underparts, short tail, light throat, streaked crown, at least one prominent wing bar, and the trace of a hidden wing stripe, we can only deduce that the bird pictured is a Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*).

The fine black-and-white photo of a Pine Siskin was taken by Robert Marshall at the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies on January 5, 1987.

Wayne R. Petersen



Pine Siskin

Photo by Robert Marshall

AT A GLANCE

Photo by Wayne R. Petersen



Can you identify this bird? (*right*)

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.



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