

GOOD YEAR FOR NESTING GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS



*Grasshopper Sparrow in Clinton, MA, 1993*      Photo by Robert C. Bradbury

1993 was a banner year for nesting Grasshopper Sparrows in central Massachusetts, with reports from three localities. There have been few reports in recent years. The only reliable location has been the 250-acre parachute drop zone at Fort Devens (South Post) in Lancaster. This grassland area is not open to the public. On June 25, 1993, from 6:15 until 9:00 AM, with the weather clear and calm, Mark Blazis, Barton Kamp, Frances McMenemy, Thomas Poole, and I surveyed this area. We found twenty-four singing male Grasshopper Sparrows, as well as thirteen others of the same species. The latter included six fledglings and two birds carrying food. We also saw two Upland Sandpipers.

Later that morning, we surveyed the closed landfill at Fort Devens (North Post) in Ayer. We found two singing male Grasshopper Sparrows plus three others. We also watched an Upland Sandpiper presumably defending a nest by flying around us and calling constantly.

On June 7 (McMenemy) and June 10 (myself), two Grasshopper Sparrows were observed at the closed landfill in Clinton. One of these birds was carrying food, while the other was singing nearby. These birds were first reported in May by Eric Salmela.

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