

in their ecosystem and hence have suffered greatly from the increased concentration levels of pesticides at each level up the food chain. A dramatic recovery followed the banning of organochlorines in the early 1970s, with the population increasing in our area ten percent per year initially, and up to twenty percent during the mid-1980s. This recovery was enhanced by the instillation of artificial nesting platforms, particularly in the Westport and Martha's Vineyard areas. In parts of the Northeast the Osprey has now recovered to pre-DDT era levels and beyond. The Osprey adjusts well to the presence of man, and can become quite tame, as evidenced by nests on channel markers despite heavy boat traffic, and in one case in the parking lot of an amusement park!

W.E. Davis, Jr.

MEET OUR COVER ARTIST

Barry Van Dusen continues to contribute cover art to *Bird Observer*. Barry was the artist for *A Birder's Guide to Eastern Massachusetts*, a joint publication of the American Birding Association and Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc. Barry also illustrated *Birds of Massachusetts*. He can be reached at 13 Radford Road, Princeton, Massachusetts 01541.

M. Steele

AT A GLANCE August 1994 _____ Wayne R. Petersen

August's mystery photo is unambiguously one of those sneaky, streaky, brown jobs—that is, a sparrow. Sparrows are always tough; sometimes because they are wary and hard to observe and sometimes because different species closely resemble one another. Because the sparrow in the photo is an adult at a nest, there is no need to worry about whether it is in juvenal plumage—a plumage that can confound even experts under certain circumstances.

Two of the most useful features that should be considered when identifying sparrows are the breast pattern and the head and facial pattern. Because the bird is an adult, the presence of obvious breast and flank strikes is noteworthy. If the age was unknown, then this feature would be less useful because many juvenile sparrows have streaked underparts. In addition to the streaked underparts, the presence of a broad, pale eyebrow stripe, a thin whitish eye ring, and the apparent absence of a prominent central breast spot are features to particularly notice.

Of the numerous sparrow species occurring in Massachusetts, the best candidates for consideration are Vesper, Savannah, Henslow's Sharp-tailed, Fox,