

In winter of 1950-51, I selected a circuit, 44 miles in length, that was covered repeatedly. The maximum count of 16 Meadowlarks was obtained December 31, 1950. This number dwindled to two birds seen on February 22, and again on February 23. This represents a potential loss of 88 per cent. I doubt if the true loss was this high. What causes an initially high or low wintering population is uncertain. Field observations indicate that a November snowstorm will hold most of the Meadowlarks present at the time. The pleasant, prolonged fall of 1952 was followed by an exceptionally mild winter; however, during the entire winter I was unable to find in the county more than four Western Meadowlarks, all in one flock.—A. W. SCHORGER, 168 N. Prospect Ave., Madison, Wisconsin.

The Ipswich Sparrow (*Passerculus princeps*) on Chesapeake Bay, Virginia.—The presence of the Ipswich Sparrow in winter on the coast of Virginia has long been known, but because of its highly selective habitat its exact status has never been accurately determined. For example, Rives termed it "common in winter at Cobb's Island" (A Catalogue of the Birds of the Virginias, 1890: 73); and according to Grey, from Cape Henry south to the North Carolina line there are only four definite records (Raven, 21: 93, 1950). Murray summarizes the few records available and states that it is a "scarce winter visitor on the coast" (A Check-list of the Birds of Virginia, 1952: 107). Therefore it comes as a surprise to discover that it is apparently a regular but highly local transient and winter visitor on certain parts of the western shore of Chesapeake Bay.

Away from the immediate coast the Ipswich Sparrow was first seen in Virginia at Seaford, York County, on November 25, 1949, by Dr. John H. Grey, Jr., Charles E. Stevens, and the writer. Because of the unusual nature of this record the writer returned on December 2 and collected what was presumably the same bird. This specimen is now in the collection of the U. S. National Museum. Since that first record, individual birds have been recorded once or more each winter by several observers, including, in addition to the above named, R. J. Beasley and R. A. Glassel. All records thus far have been on the immediate Bay shore between Hampton Roads (lower James River) and York River, locally known as the Lower Peninsula. Generally, only one or two birds are recorded on any one trip, but on January 23, 1953, Grey and the writer found three together at Grandview, Hampton (formerly Elizabeth City) County. Returning to this area on January 30, the same observers made a careful census along three miles of Bay shore from Grandview north to Northend Point. At least seven Ipswich Sparrows were seen on this census, of which two were collected, far more than have been reported on any single day even on the coast of Virginia.

The almost exclusive habitat of this species on the coast is the grass-covered sand dunes and the beaches of the outer barrier islands. On the western shore of southern Chesapeake Bay the habitat is similar in character but far different in scope. The dunes here, in the few places they occur, range from about 20 to 100 feet (rarely 300 feet) in depth, separating the narrow Bay beach from extensive salt marshes. It is rare to find a dune here rising over 10 feet above the beach. The Ipswich Sparrows usually prefer the grassy stretches of the dunes, although they frequently visit the tidal debris on the beach to feed, often in company with Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). Occasionally, when flushed from the dune grass, they will fly into the bushy edges of the salt marshes.

The sudden abundance of records for this species on Chesapeake Bay should not be construed to mean that it has recently extended its range. Rather, this probably indicates merely an increase of field work where little has been done previously.—FREDERIC R. SCOTT, 27 Malvern Avenue, Richmond 21, Virginia.