

WELCOME. Thanks for joining us.

We'll start in a few minutes. Until then:

- Please mute your microphone.
- Do not click "Present Now."
- **Ask your questions in the Chat box. We'll moderate those.**

Tech Problems?

- Try leaving the meeting and rejoining.

Please leave the recording to us — the session will be available online within 48 hours.



LIVE Online: SOLVING SPARROWS

with Bryan Pfeiffer / May 1, 2020

www.NorthBranchNatureCenter.org

SOLVING SPARROWS

A Simple Method



SOLVING SPARROWS

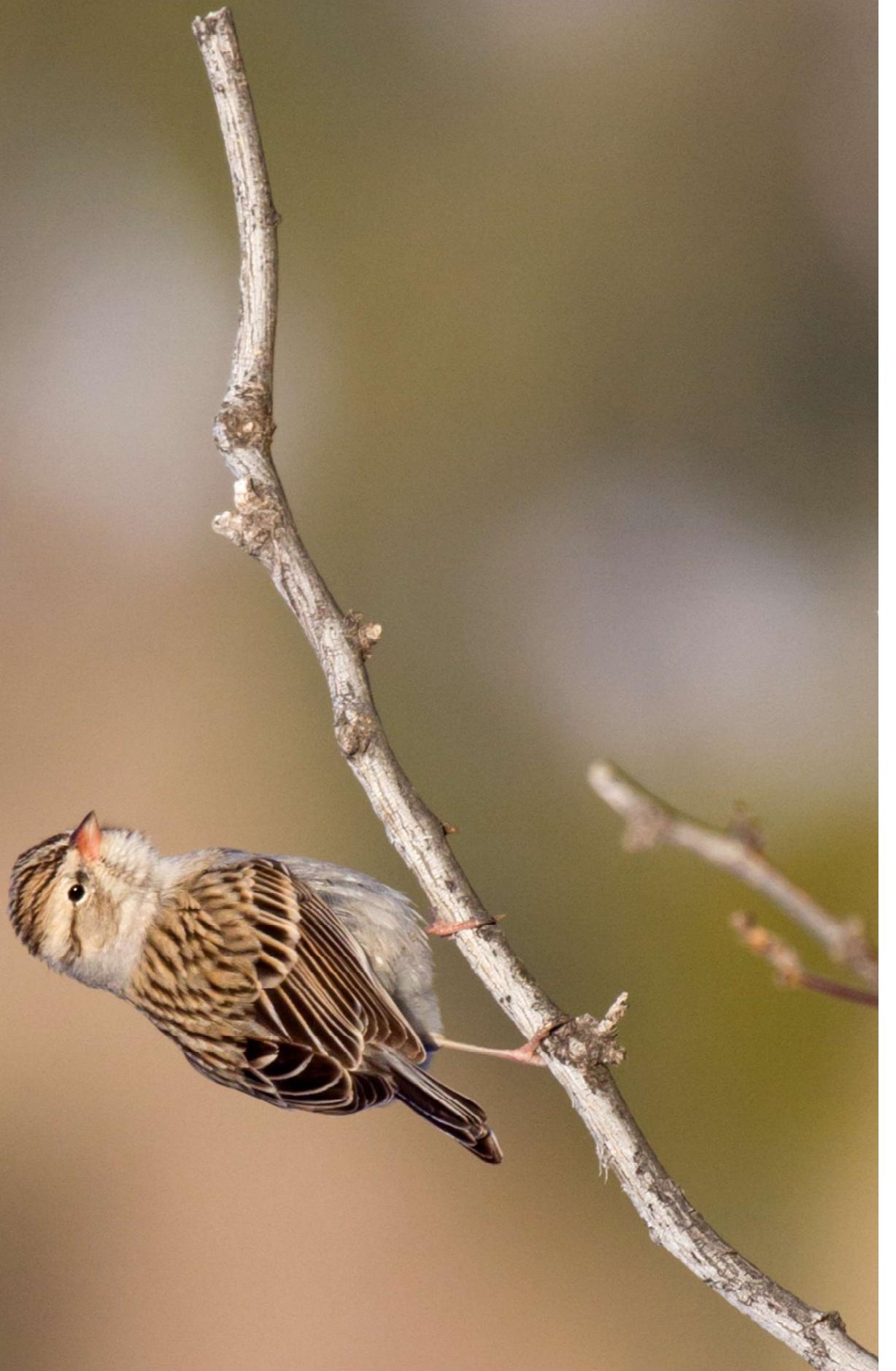
A Simple Method: Identify Any Bird You See



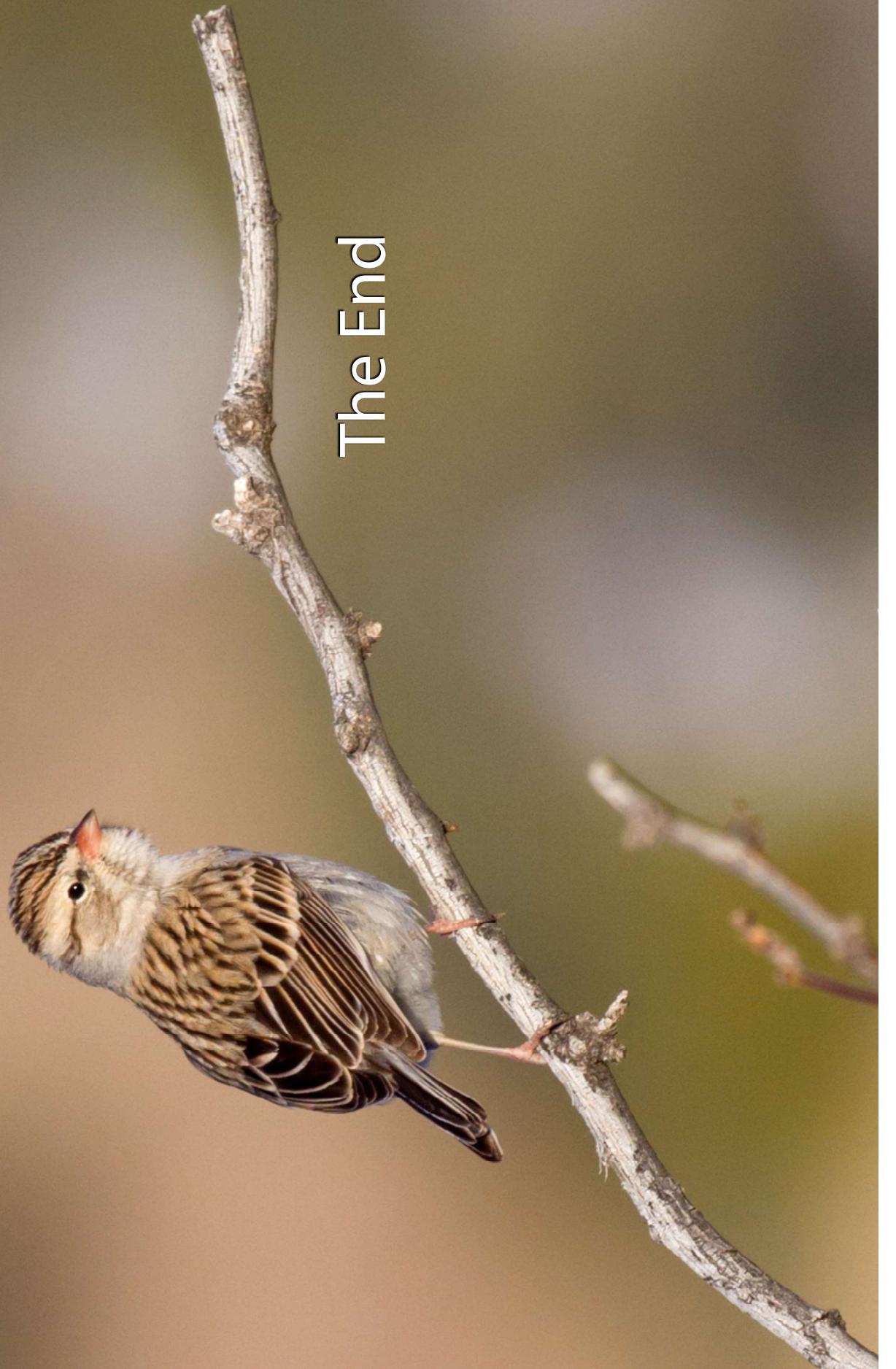




SOLVING SPARROWS



SOLVING SPARROWS



The End

SOLVING SPARROWS

Objectives/Ground Rules:



SOLVING SPARROWS

Objectives/Ground Rules:



SOLVING SPARROWS

Objectives/Ground Rules:

- Not About Species-Level Identification
- Not About Memorizing Anything Now



SOLVING SPARROWS

Objectives/Ground Rules:

- Not About Species-Level Identification
- Not About Memorizing Anything Now

- Being There
- Learning to Look
- Enjoyment

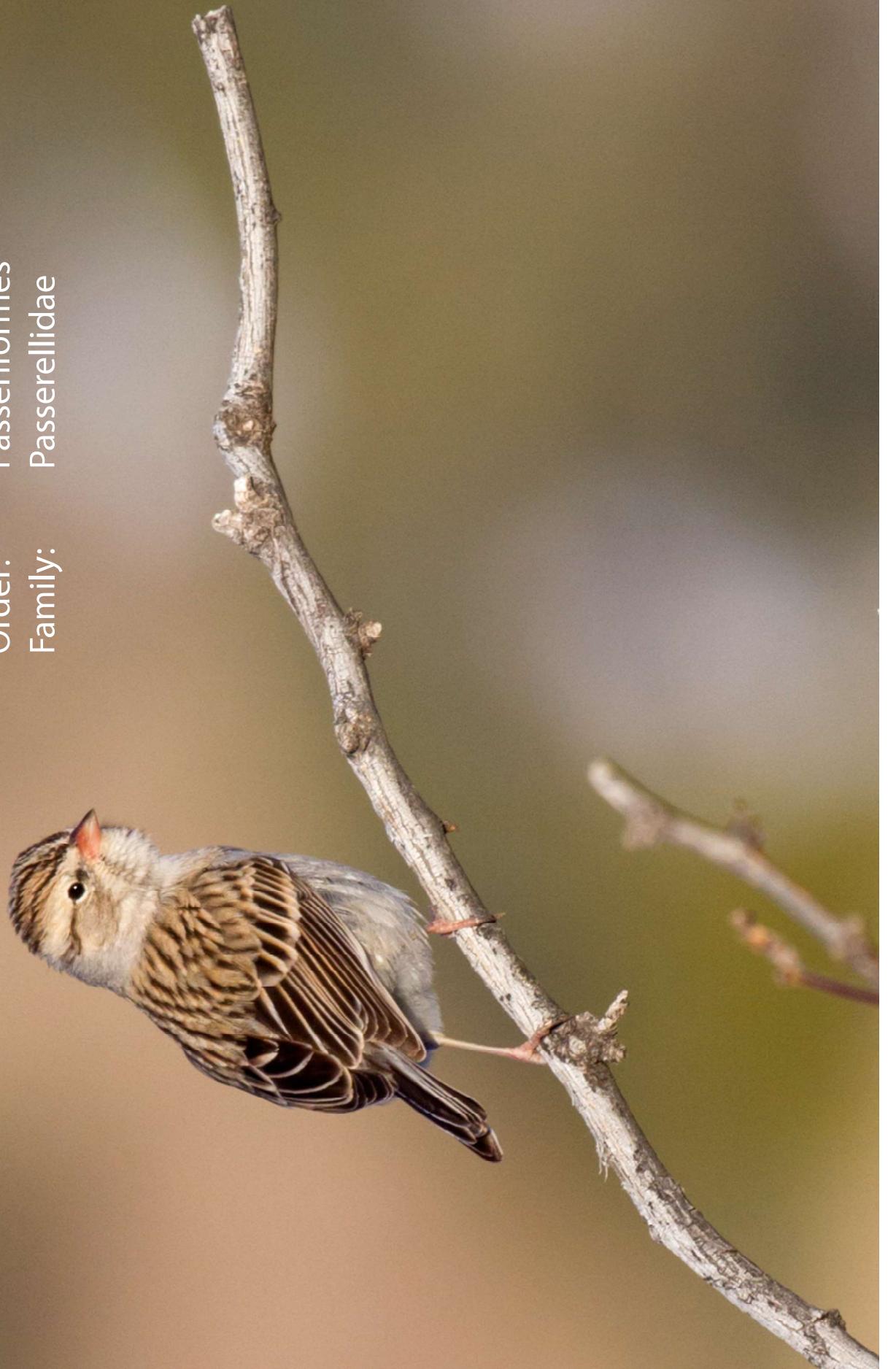






What's a Sparrow?

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Passerellidae



Passerellidae



Passerellidae



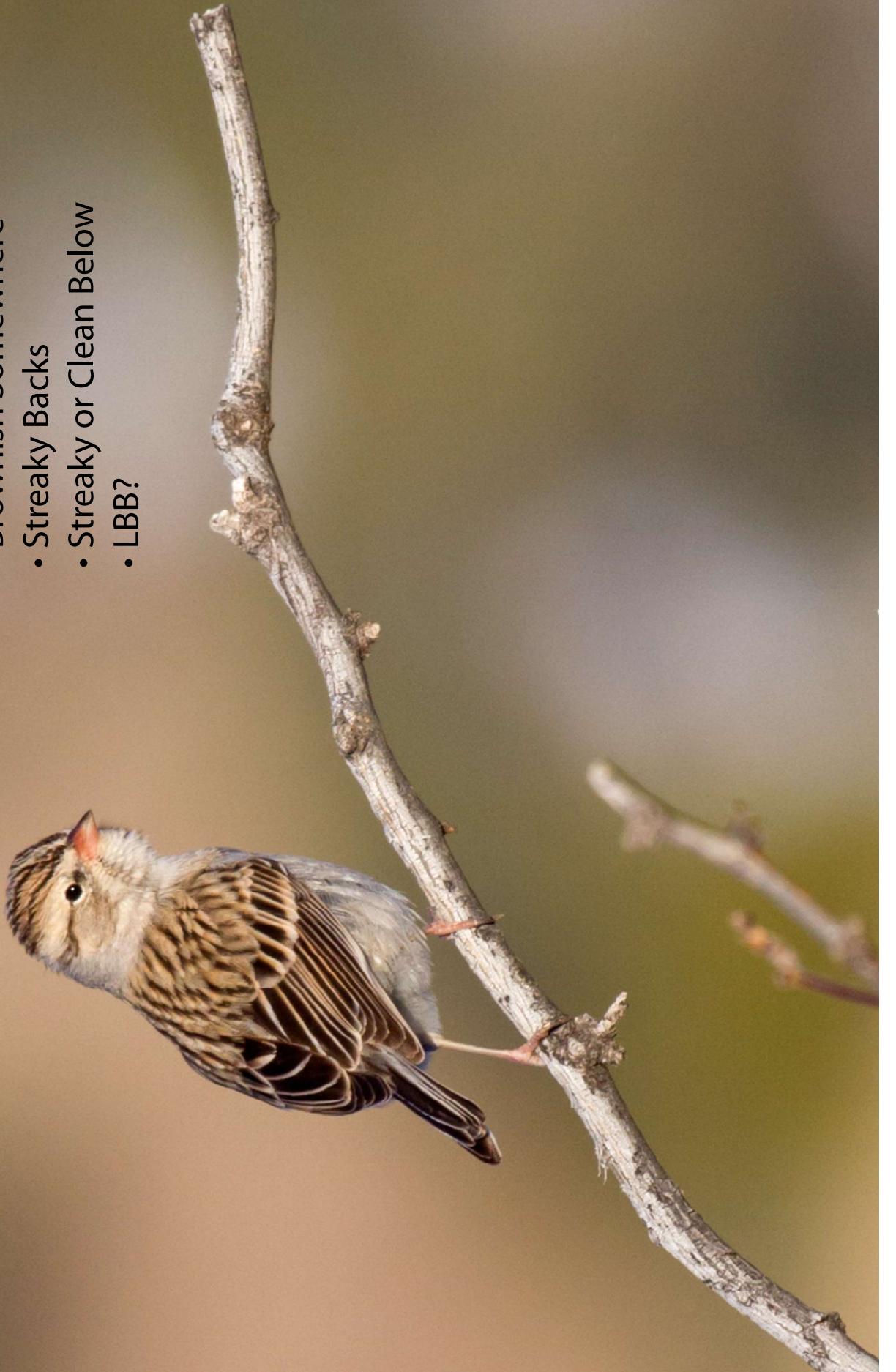
Passerellidae: Sparrows



Passerellidae: Sparrows

Morphology:

- Conical Bills
- Brownish Somewhere
- Streaky Backs
- Streaky or Clean Below
- LBB?

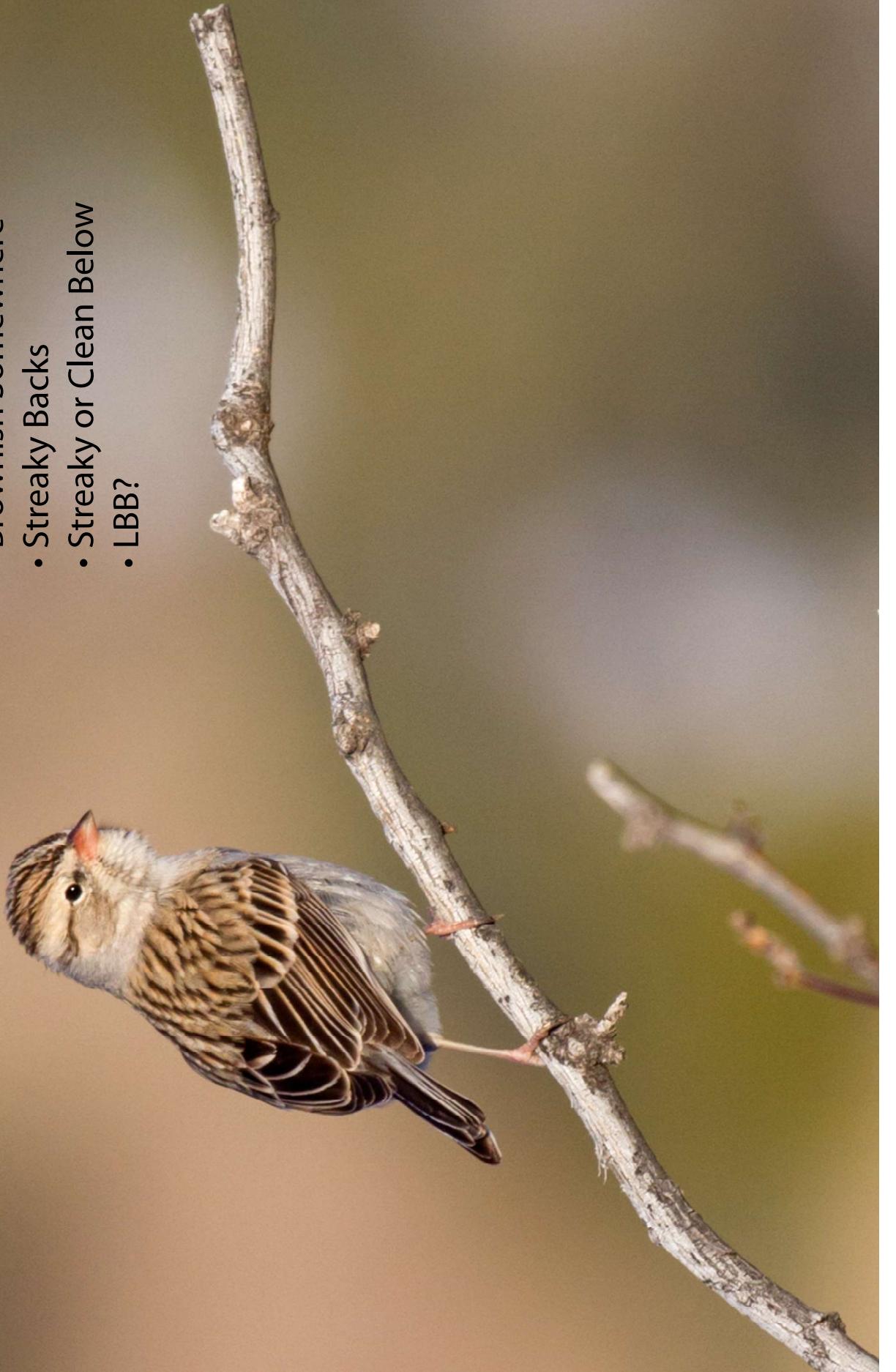




Passerellidae: Sparrows

Morphology:

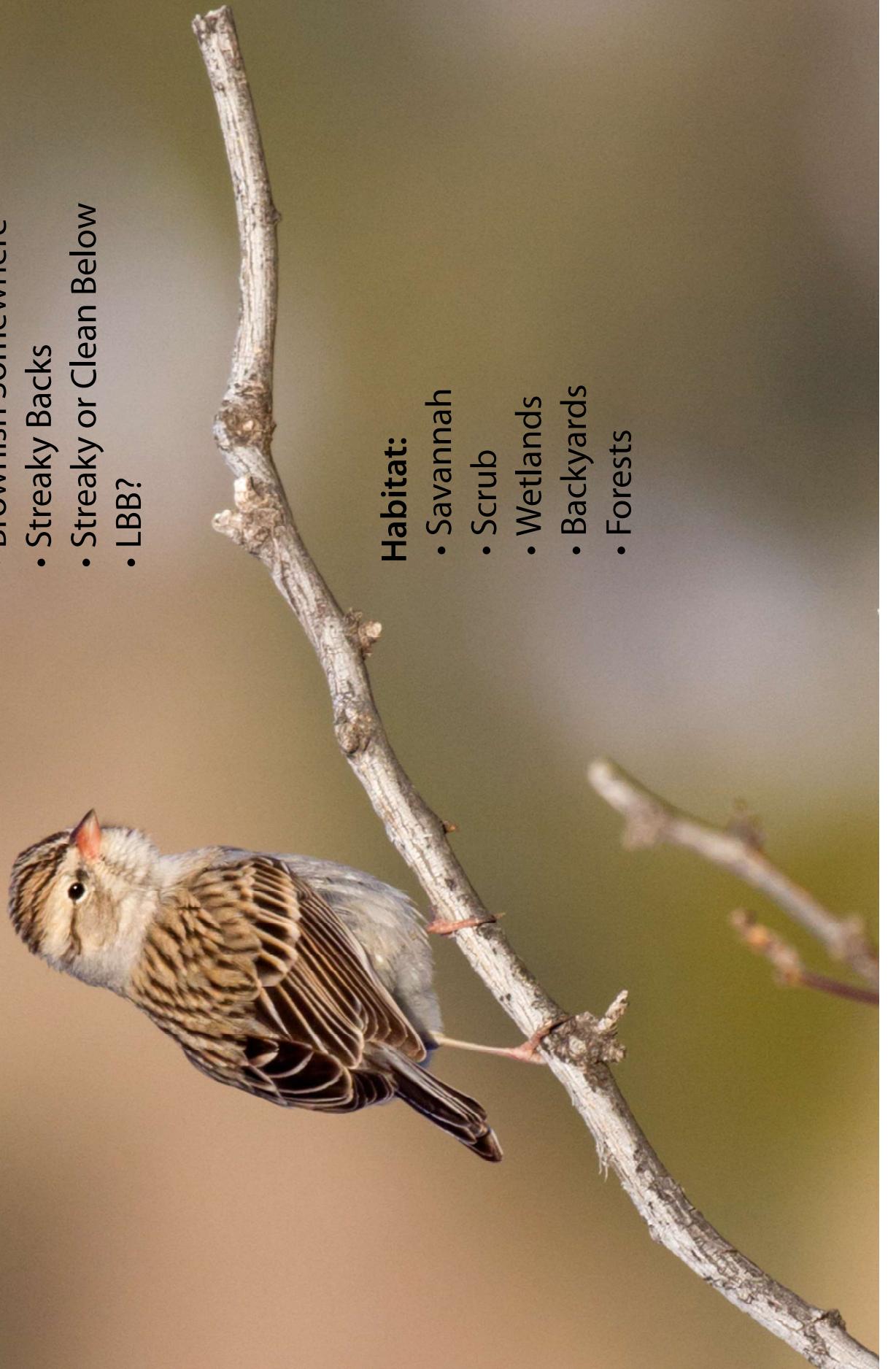
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Passerellidae: Sparrows

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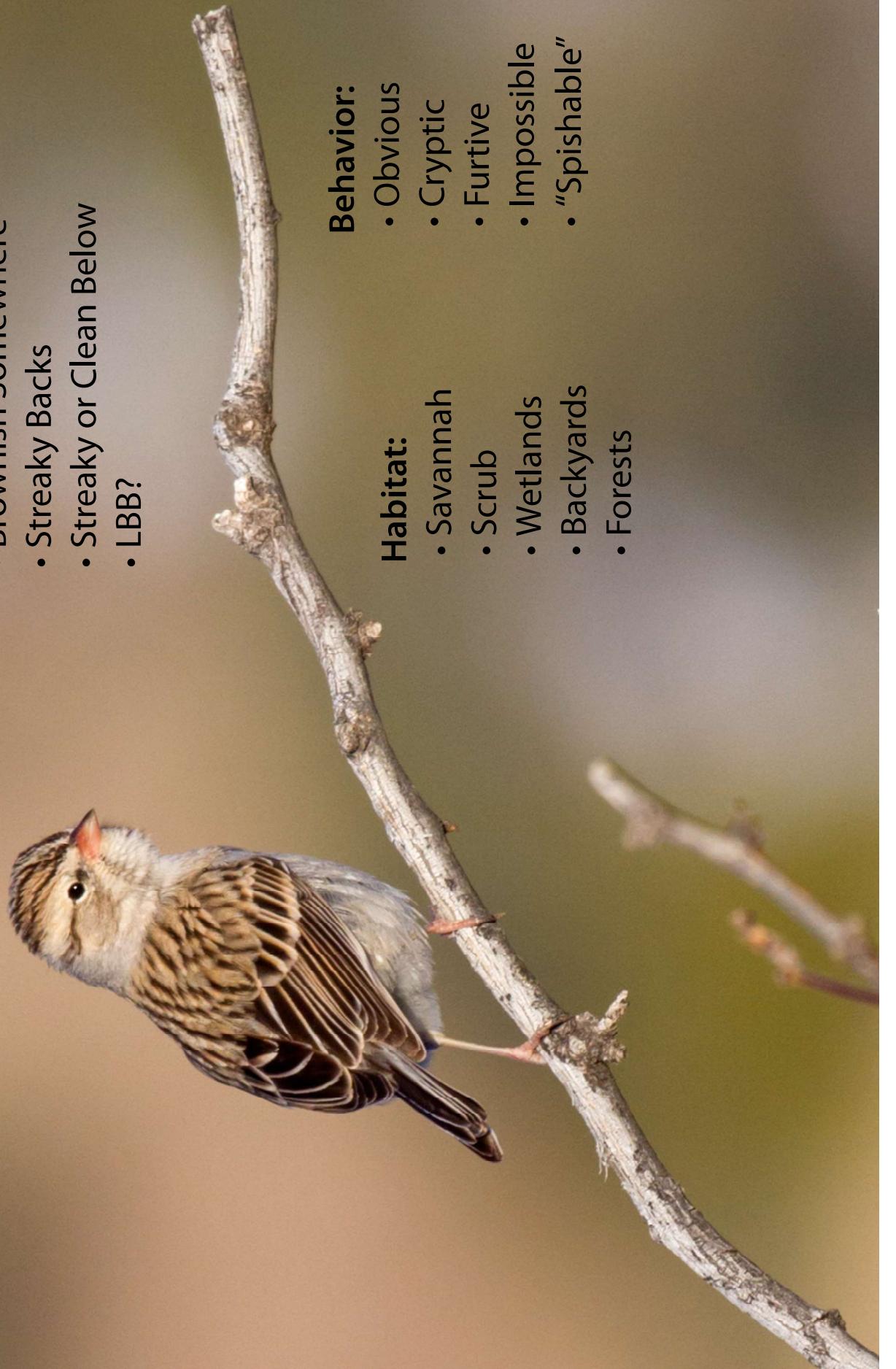
Habitat:

- Savannah
- Scrub
- Wetlands
- Backyards
- Forests

Passerellidae: Sparrows

Morphology:

- Conical Bills
- Brownish Somewhere
- Streaky Backs
- Streaky or Clean Below
- LBB?



Behavior:

- Obvious
- Cryptic
- Furtive
- Impossible
- "Spishable"
- Backyards
- Forests

Habitat:

- Savannah
- Scrub
- Wetlands
- Backyards
- Forests



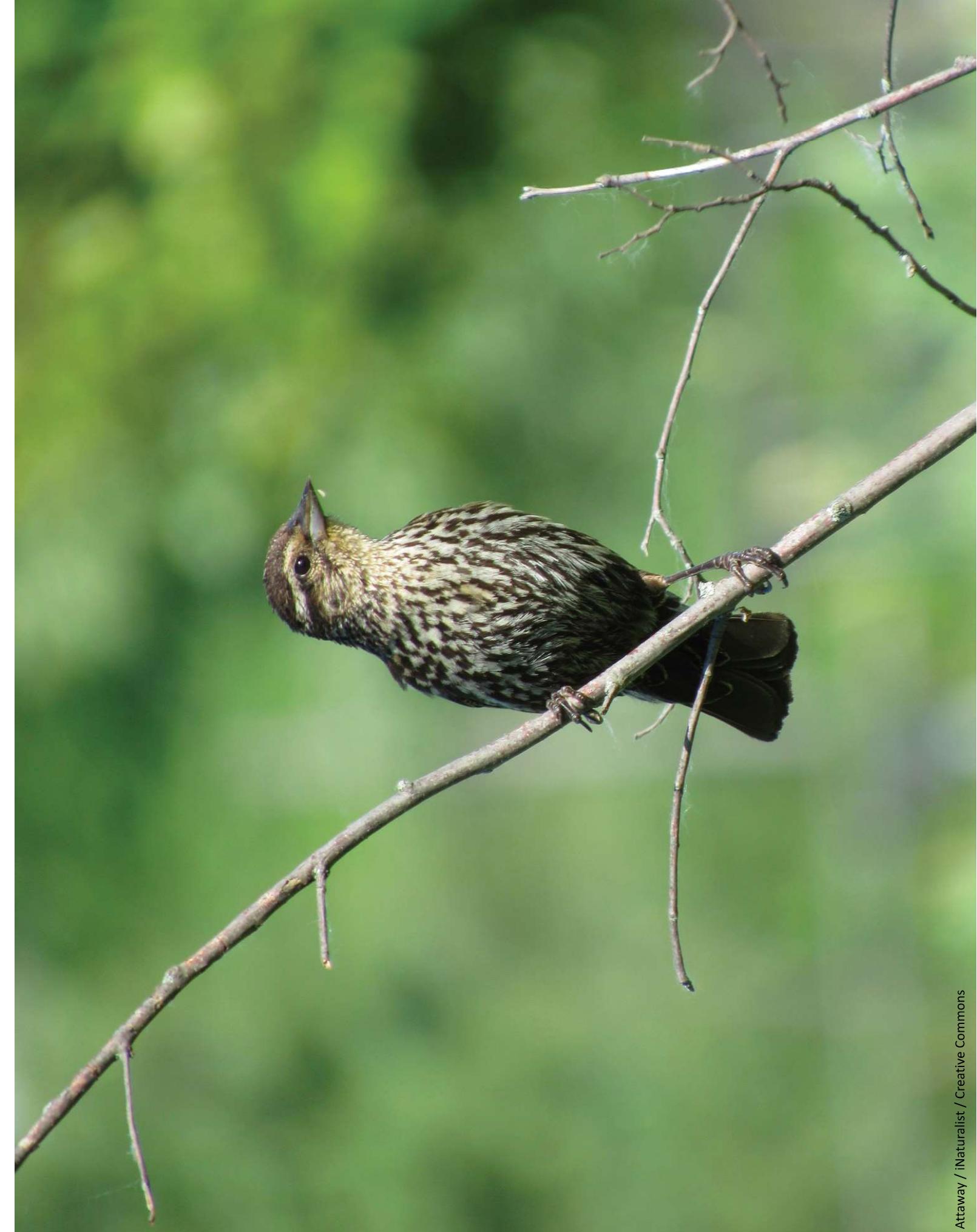


IMPOSTOR!

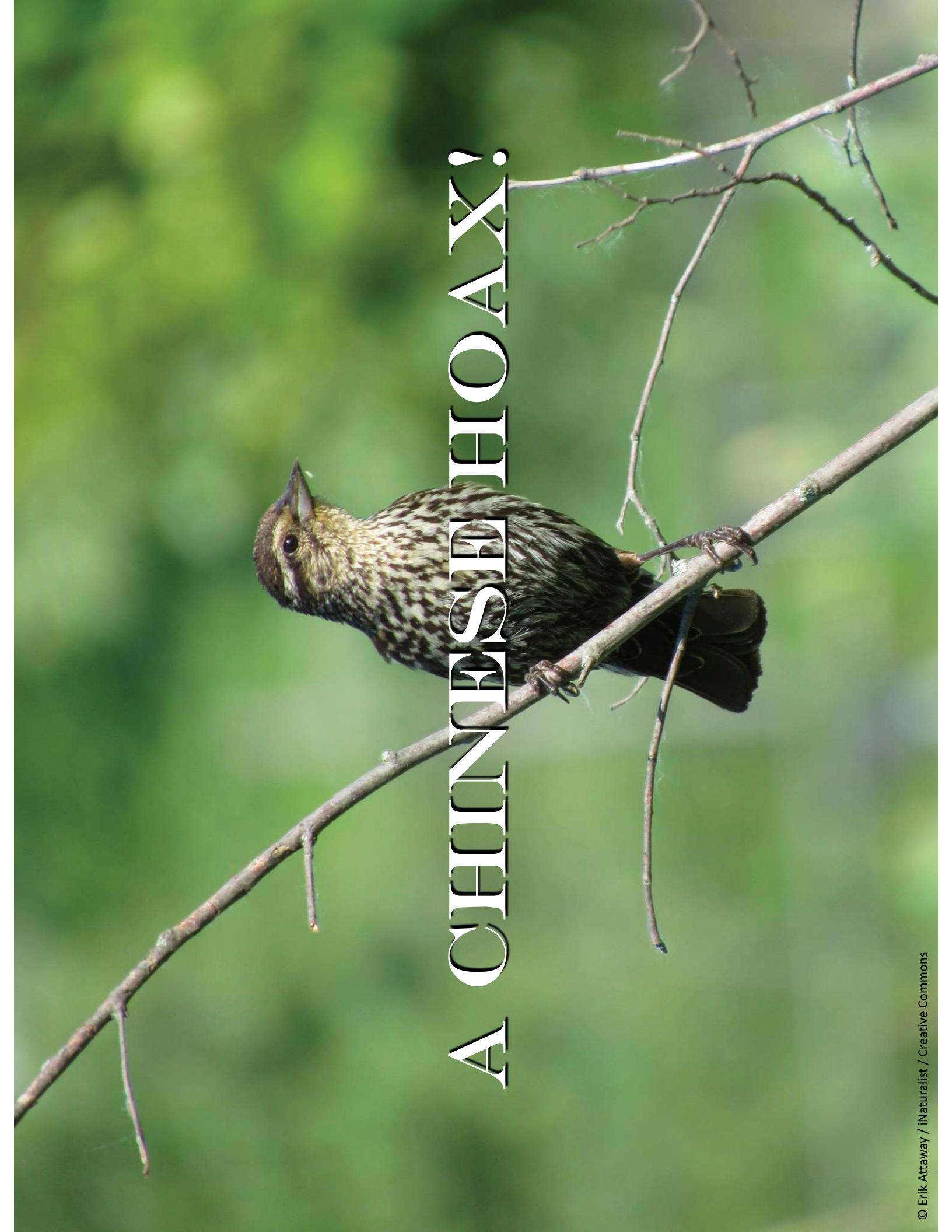


FAKE NEWS!





A CIEUNE SHOOAX!



SOLVING SPARROWS

An Identification Method: Prologue



Prologue I: You MUST Know This Bird











SOLVING SPARROWS

Homework Assignment 1: Spend time now with Song Sparrow

Advancing Birders: Calls and Immatures this Summer



Prologue II: You MUST Know Feather Morphology



Central Crown Stripe

Lateral Crown Stripe

Supercilium

Eye Line

Auriculars

Malar

Lores

Lateral Throat Stripe



Central Crown Stripe

Lateral Crown Stripe

Supercilium

Eye Line

Auriculars

Malar

Lores

Lateral Throat Stripe



Central Crown Stripe

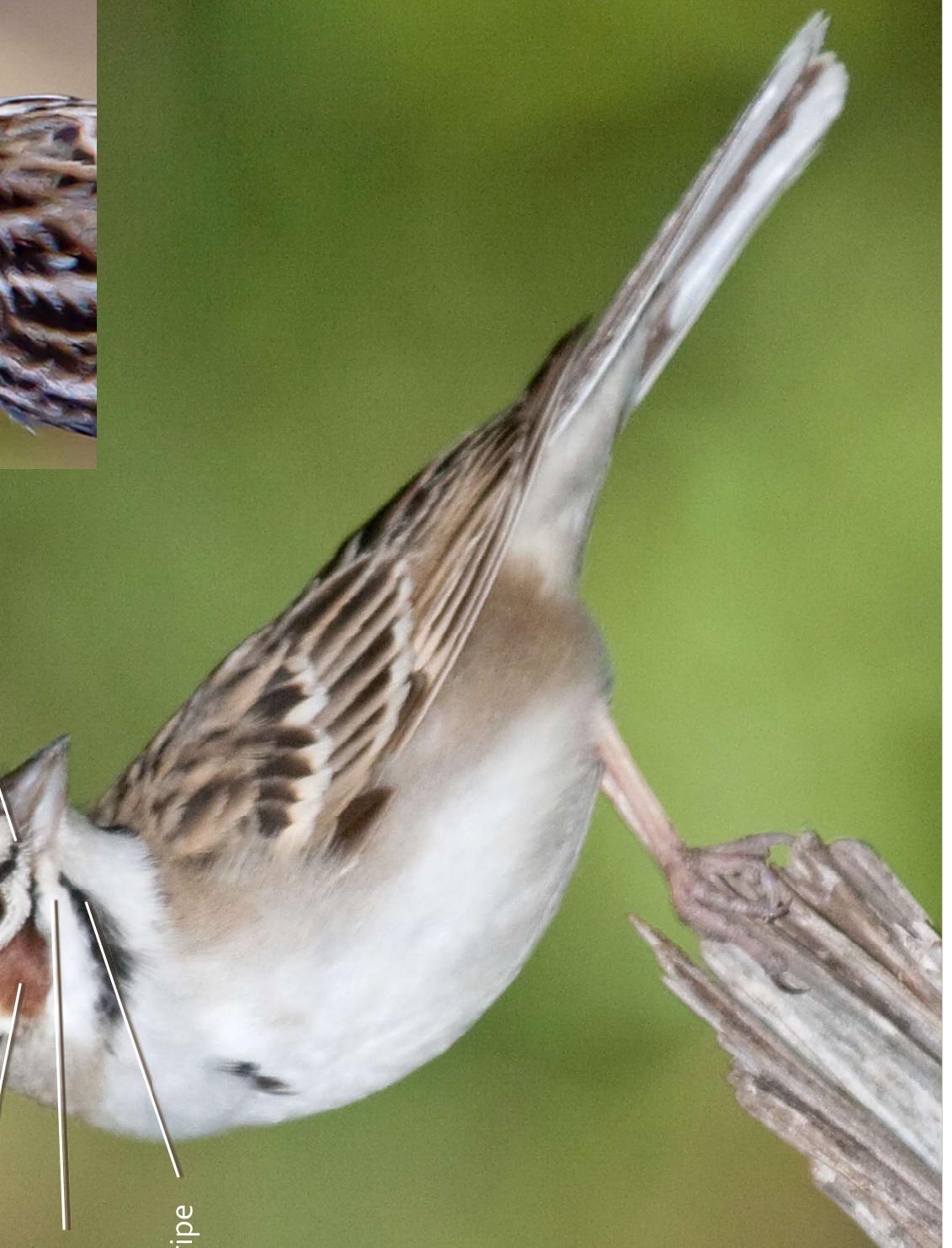
Lateral Crown Stripe

Supercilium

Eye Line

Auriculars

Malar



Lateral Throat Stripe



Central Crown Stripe

Lateral Crown Stripe

Supercilium

Eye Line

Auriculars

Malar

Lores

Lateral Throat Stripe

SOLVING SPARROWS

Homework Assignment 2: Study Head Feather Morphology in the Field

Advancing Birders: All Feather Morphology and Molt Sequences



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



Song Sparrow?



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



Song Sparrow?



Other



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



Song Sparrow?



Other



SOLVING SPARROWS

A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



Song Sparrow?



Other

Not a Song Sparrow



SOLVING SPARROWS

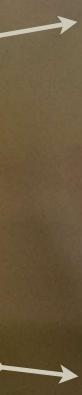
A Method:

Prologues I and II

Is it streaked or clean below?



Song Sparrow?



Other

Other



CLEAN



STREAKED



STREAKED



- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow (migrant)
- Savannah Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow

CLEAN



STREAKED



- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow (migrant)
- Savannah Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow

CLEAN



- Chipping Sparrow
- American Tree Sparrow (winter)
- Field Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow (migrant)
- Grasshopper Sparrow

STREAKED

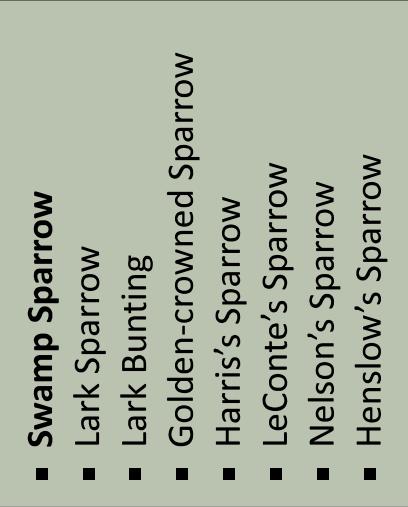


- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow (migrant)
- Savannah Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow

CLEAN



- Chipping Sparrow
- American Tree Sparrow (winter)
- Field Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow (migrant)
- Grasshopper Sparrow



- **Swamp Sparrow**
- Lark Sparrow
- Lark Bunting
- Golden-crowned Sparrow
- Harris's Sparrow
- LeConte's Sparrow
- Nelson's Sparrow
- Henslow's Sparrow

Compare and Contrast: Example I



Compare and Contrast: Example I





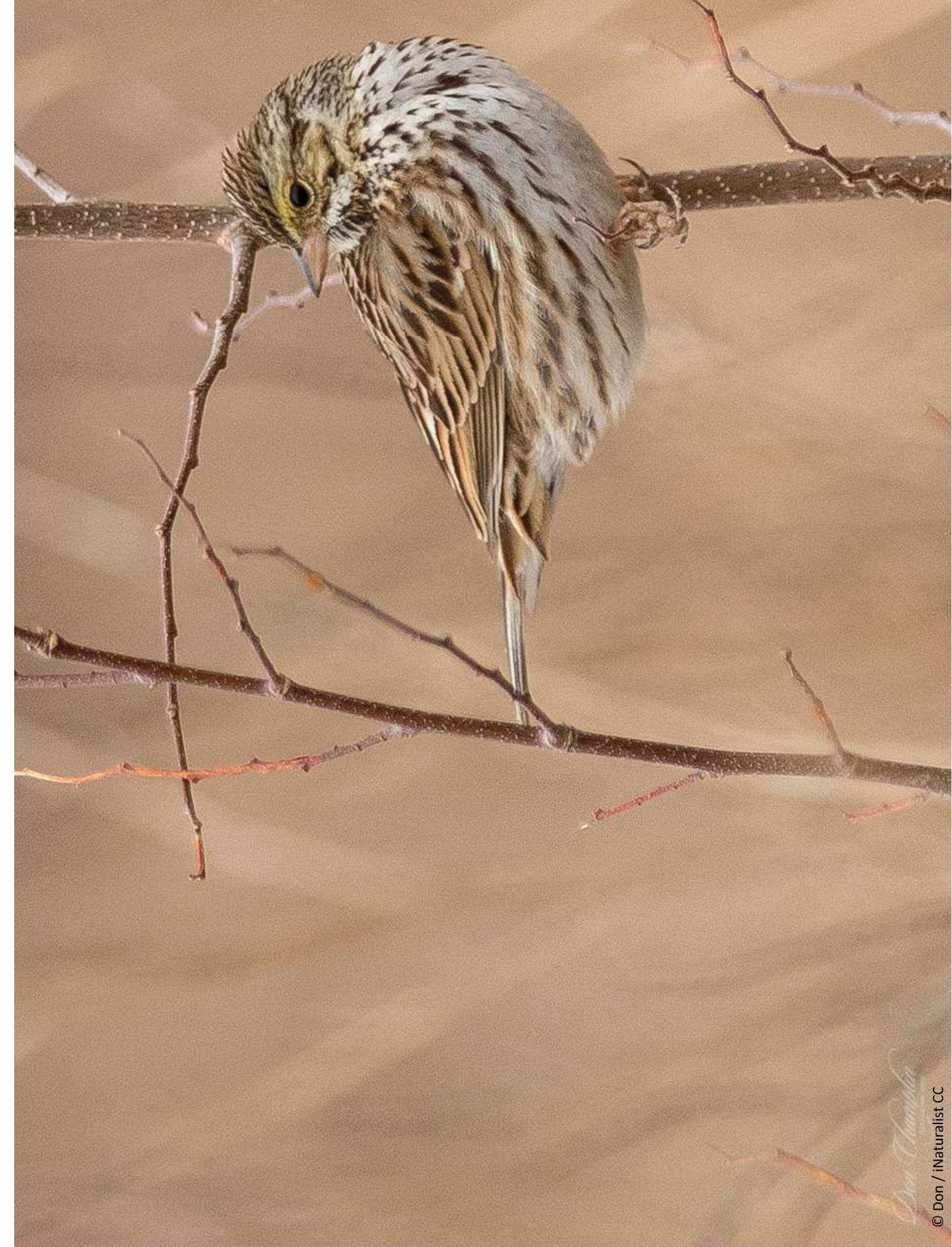
© Greg Lasley / iNaturalist CC

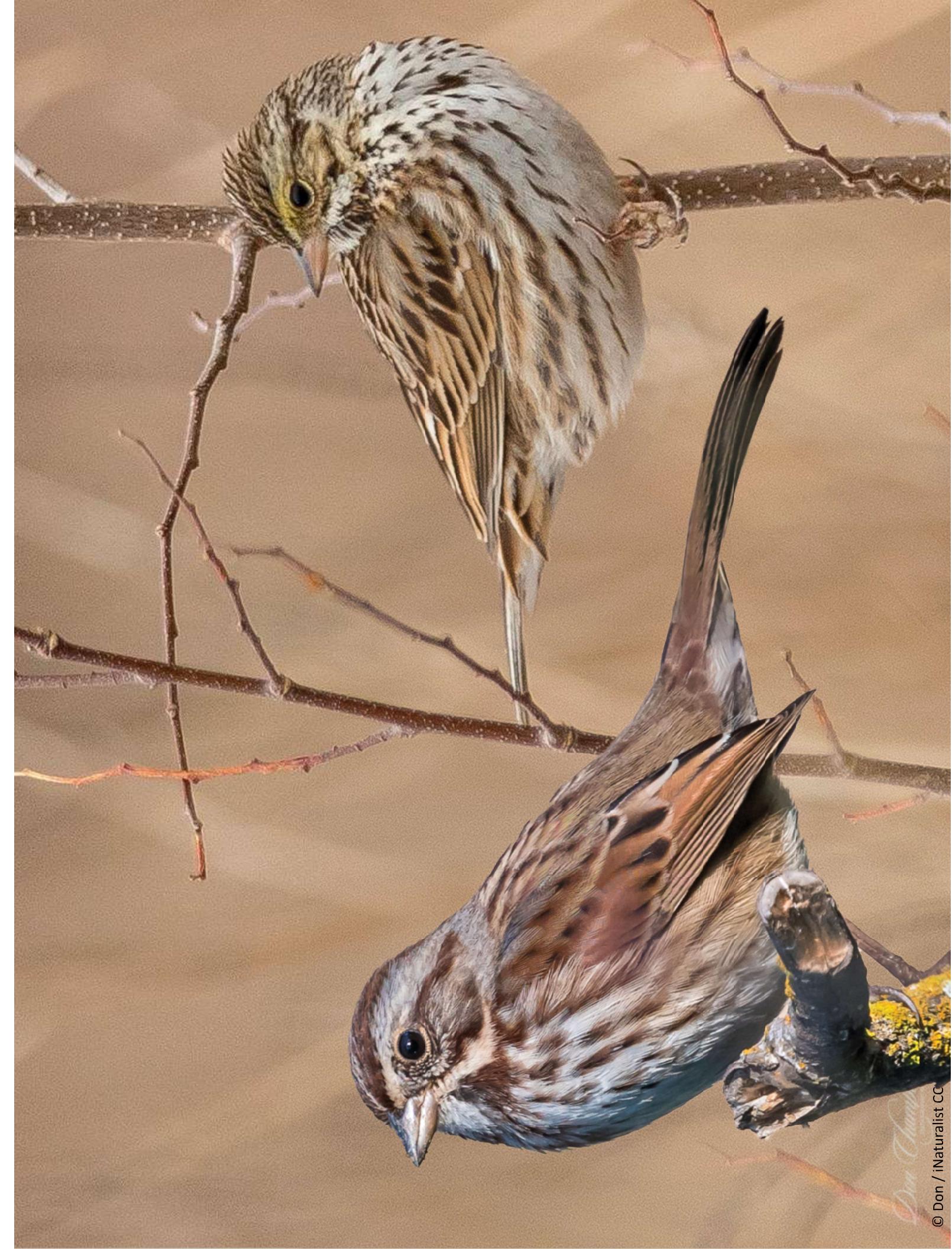


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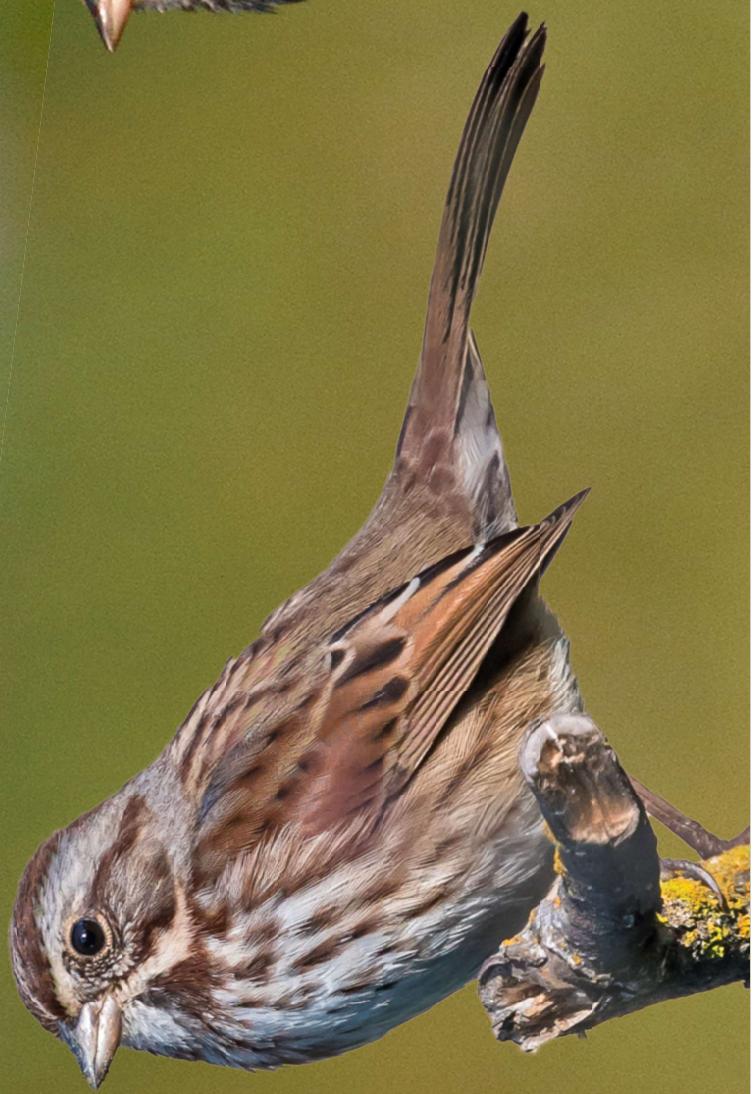
Compare and Contrast: Example II





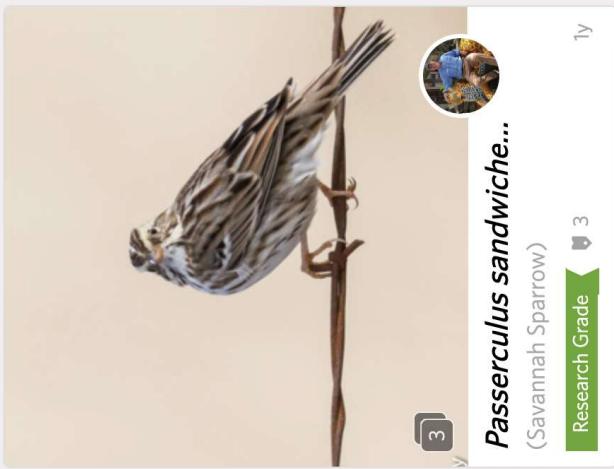








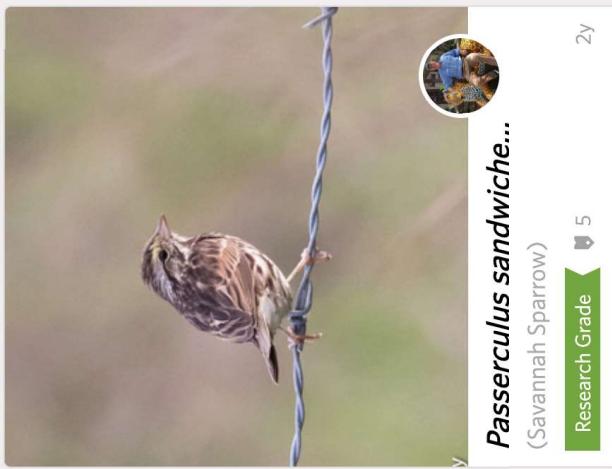




Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

1y

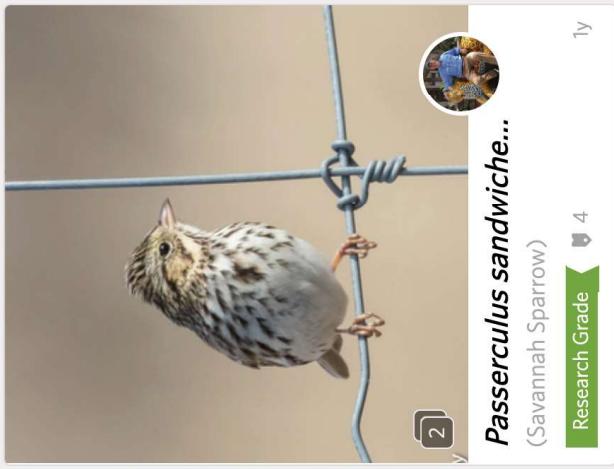
Research Grade 3



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

2y

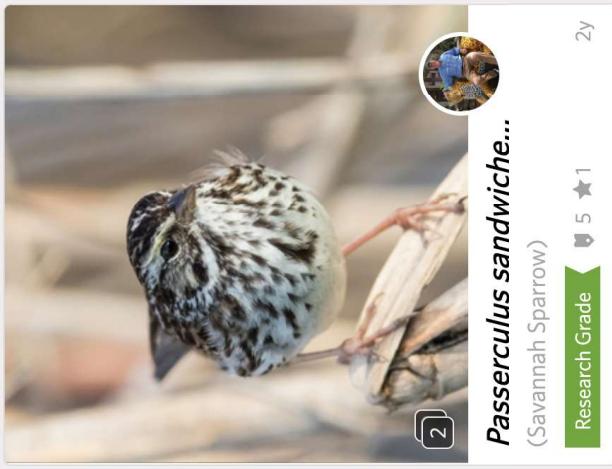
Research Grade 5



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

1y

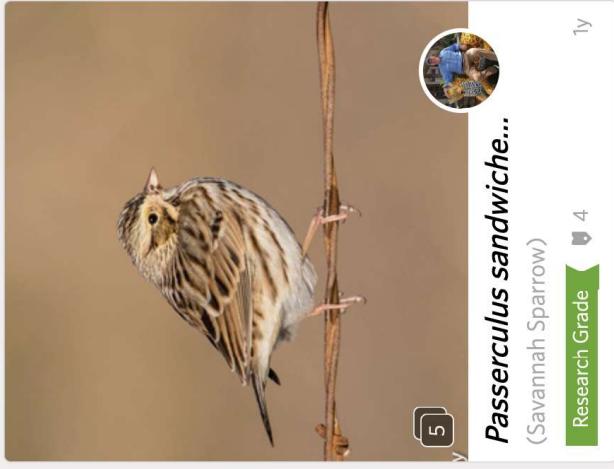
Research Grade 4



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

2y

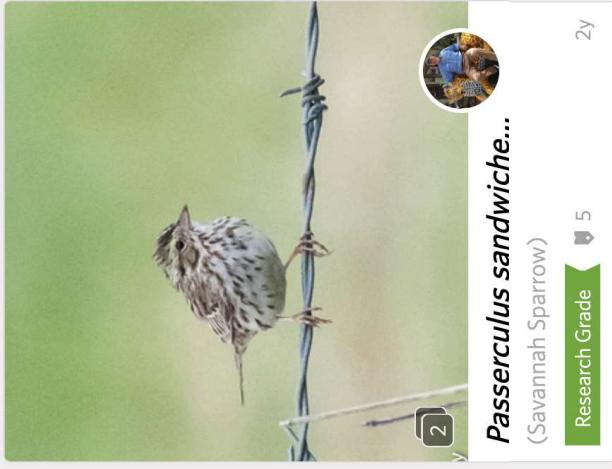
Research Grade 5 ★ 1



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

1y

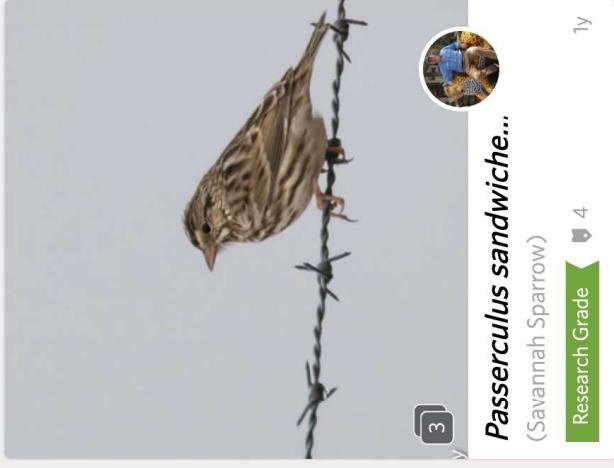
Research Grade 4



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

2y

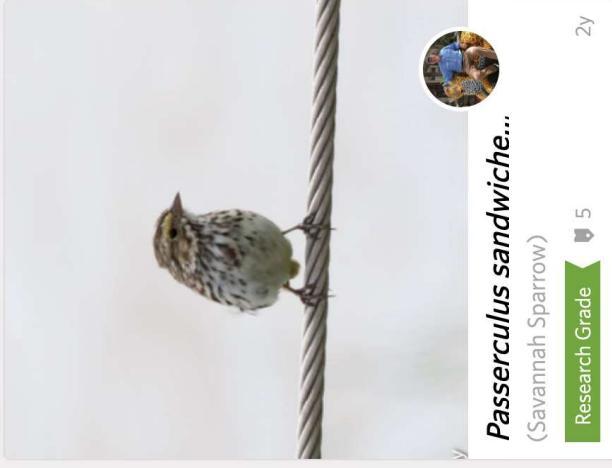
Research Grade 5



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

1y

Research Grade 4



Passerculus sandwichae...
(Savannah Sparrow)

2y

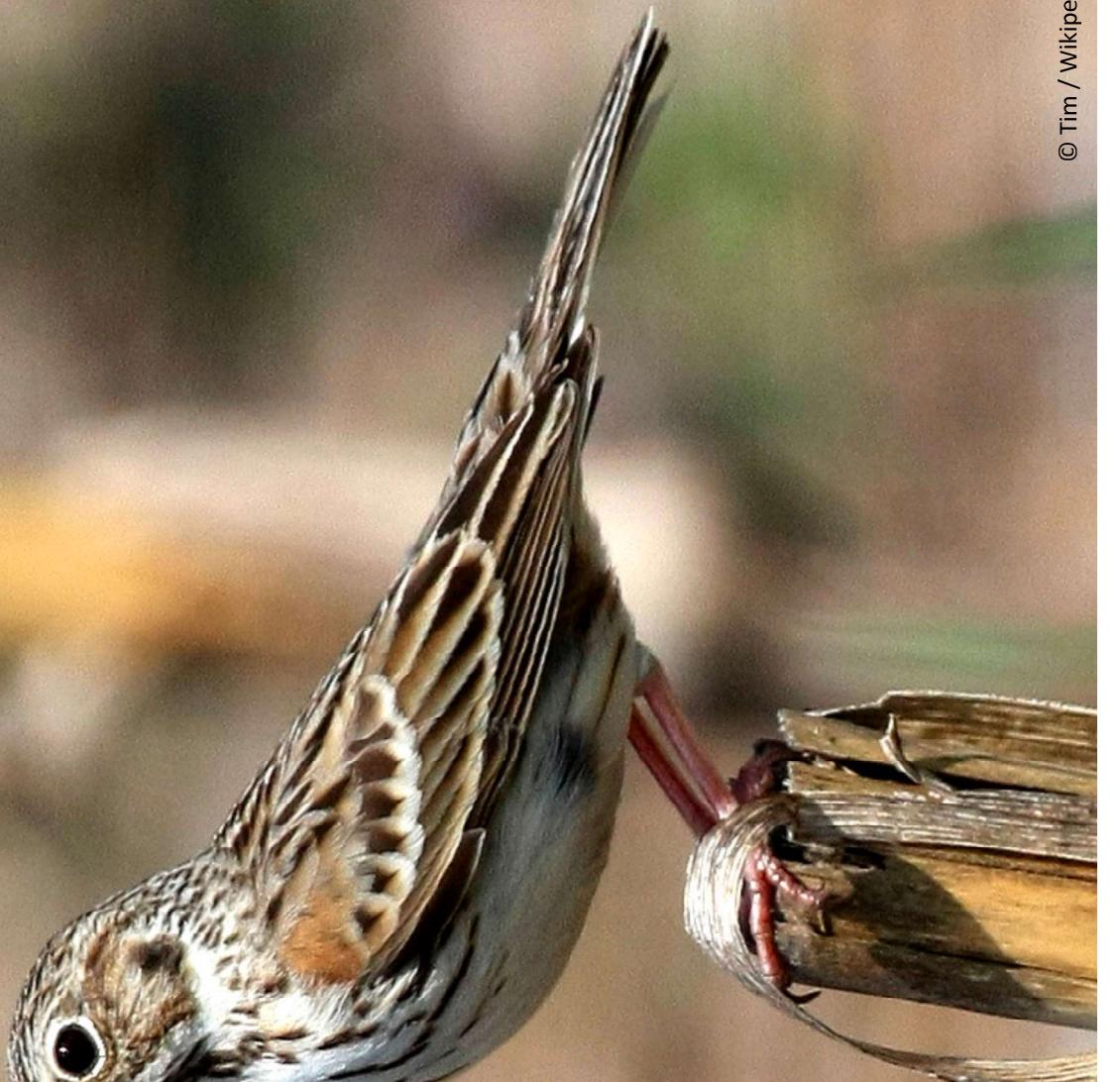
Research Grade 5

Compare-and-Contrast: Example III











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STREAKED



- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow (migrant)
- Savannah Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow

CLEAN



- Chipping Sparrow
- American Tree Sparrow (winter)
- Field Sparrow
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- White-throated Sparrow
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- **Swamp Sparrow**
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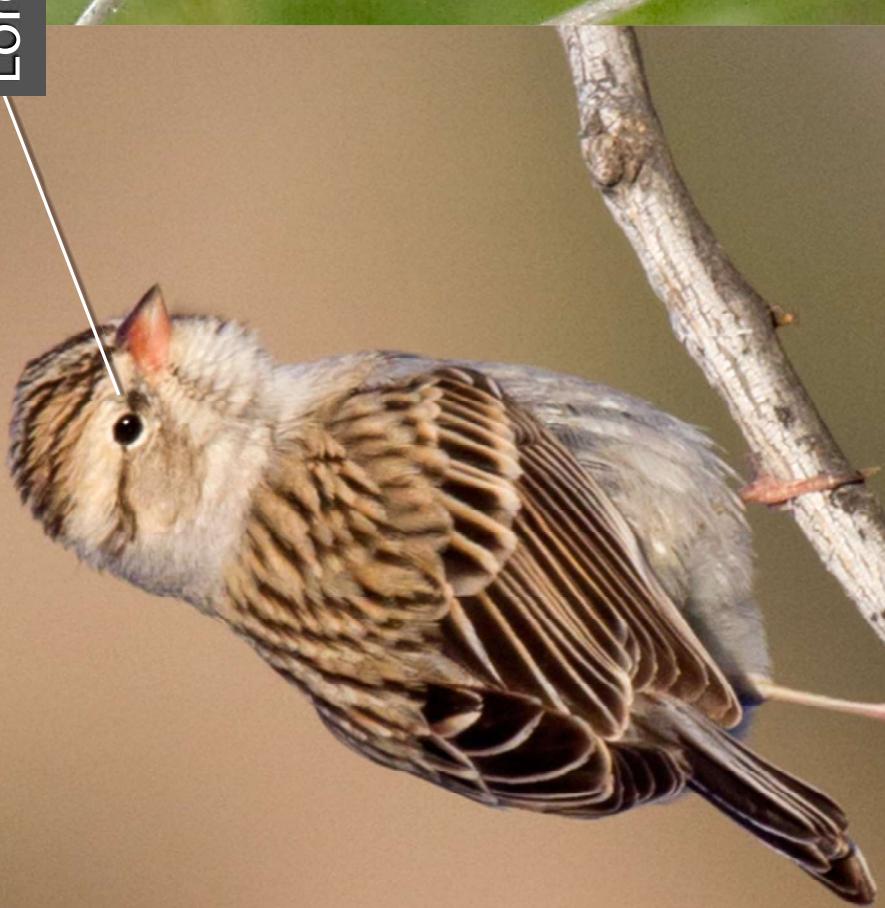








Lores





Lores

Lateral Throat
Stripe



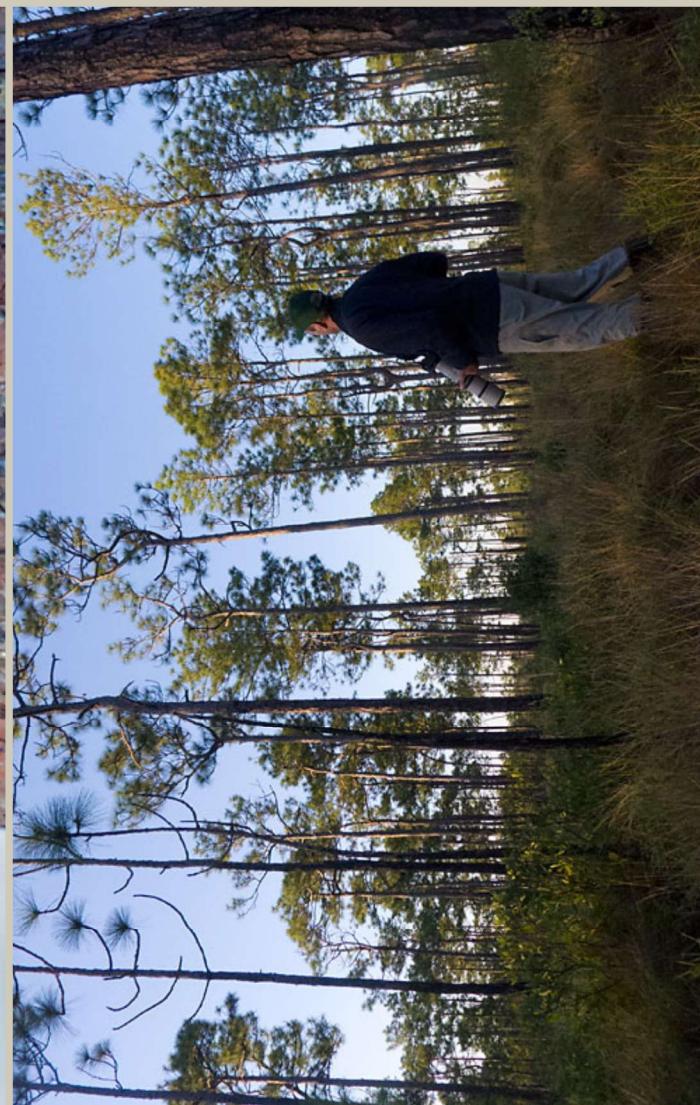
Lores

Lateral Throat
Stripe

A "Generic" Approach











A Habitat and Seasonal Approach to Vermont Sparrows

A Habitat and Seasonal Approach to Vermont Sparrows

Common Breeders

Streaked

- **Song Sparrow** – Widespread, almost everywhere except forests, mountain summits
- **Savannah Sparrow** – Fields in breeding season, varied in migration
- **Swamp Sparrow** (dingy) – Wetlands, mostly cattail marshes; elsewhere in migration

Clean

- **Chipping Sparrow** – Yards, forest openings; sings from trees
- **White-throated Sparrow** (can be faintly streaked or messy) – Widespread in forests and forest openings

A Habitat and Seasonal Approach to Vermont Sparrows

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Uncommon or Rare Breeders

Streaked

- **Lincoln's Sparrow** – Bogs but sometimes scrubby fields or, rarely, even cattails; varied in habitat choices during migration
- **Vesper Sparrow** – Grasslands (near trees) at scattered sites; grasslands in migration

Clean

- **Field Sparrow** – Scrubby fields, "bouncing ball" song is often your first clue
- **Clay-colored Sparrow** – Relatively new breeder in scattered scrubby sites
- **Grasshopper Sparrow** – Very few grassland sites

A Habitat and Seasonal Approach to Vermont Sparrows

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Common Migrants

- **Fox Sparrow (Streaky)** – Widespread, often at feeders; woodlands
- **White-crowned Sparrow (Clean)** – Feeders or scrubby openings; sometimes with White-throats in migration; note brown crowns on first-winter birds

Uncommon or Rare Breeders

A Habitat and Seasonal Approach to Vermont Sparrows

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Winter "Residents"

- **American Tree Sparrow** – Shrubby areas; compare with Chipping Sparrow
- **Lapland Longspur** – Best located among Snow Buntings in the Champlain Valley

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Other Crazy-Rare Species

- **Lark Sparrow** – Fall migrant; distinctive
- **Nelson's Sparrow** – Fall migrant; rare but seemingly regular
- **Harris' Sparrow** – Few records.

RECAP



RECAP

- Be *stealthy, subtle and patient*



RECAP

- Be stealthy, subtle and patient
- Spish a lot (responsibly)



RECAP

- Be stealthy, subtle and patient
- Spish a lot (responsibly)
- Know Song Sparrow



RECAP

- Be stealthy, subtle and patient
- Spish a lot (responsibly)
- Know Song Sparrow



RECAP

- Be stealthy, subtle and patient
 - Spish a lot (responsibly)
 - Know Song Sparrow
- Behavior Matters
 - Consider Season and Habitat



RECAP

- Be stealthy, subtle and patient
- Spish a lot (responsibly)
- Know Song Sparrow
- Behavior Matters
- Consider Season and Habitat
- Seek out the Specialties







"I was complaining because I had no Swarovskis. Then I met a man who had no sparrows."





"I was complaining because I had no Swarovskis. Then I met a man who had no spearrows sense of Song Sparrow or feather head morphology."



A small brown bird, possibly a sparrow or finch, is perched on a dry, light-colored plant stem. The bird is facing towards the left of the frame, with its head tilted upwards and slightly to the right, as if it is singing or looking at something in the sky. Its feathers are a mix of brown and tan, providing camouflage against the background. The background is a soft-focus view of similar dry plants, creating a natural and rustic setting.

QUESTIONS?