



## ROCK SPARROW

BY SHARON BEALS

### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary  
United States  
Common Rock Sparrow  
*Petronia petronia*

Collected from Dalai Nor, Heilungkiang Province, China, 1935  
The California Academy of Sciences

This loose arrangement of grass, fur, and feathers was built by a pair of Common Rock Sparrows, a species found in the Canary Islands, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. They belong to the family of Old World Sparrows, seedeaters that share an adaptation unique among granivores. They are equipped with tongues toughened with a stiff skeletal structure and horny palates, which work like miniature nutcrackers to crush seeds. These sturdy bills grow longer during breeding season to capture insects. They nest in crevices in rocks, trees, animal dens, and burrows made by other birds, and when close to humans, aba...