

SONG SPARROW NEST

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States
Song Sparrow Melospiza melodia
The sweet trillings of male Song Sparrows can be heard from the Aleutian Islands all the way to Newfoundland, and southward to Central America. There are twenty-four diagnosable subspecies, from robin- to wren-sized, and while they are most common in riparian habitats, their omnivorous diet enables them to live in salt marshes, coastal scrub, forests, chaparral, farmlands, gardens, and parks.
Though some populations migrate, many live year-round in small song-claimed territories. Song Sparrows may be monogamous, or both sexes may have other mates, simultaneously or serially. There are reports of rare communal nesting: two pairs of Song Sparrows raised their broods in the same nest; in another, a female Song Sparrow and a Cardinal incubated what turned out to be a brood of Cardinals.
Communicating with soft notes, the pairs search for a nest site together, the female showing her interest by moving her body as if she were molding the interior of a nest. They are usually hidden under foliage, either on the ground, or in a branch of a tree or shrub, or in cattails, and even in cactus. Quietly and cautiously, she weaves a loose but sturdy foundation, and then shapes its inner cup, lining this with finer, more tightly woven

fibers. Materials vary depending on habitat: grass, weeds, ferns, bark strips, leaves, even ice plant or seaweed are used for the outer rim, and fine grass, animal hair, plant down, or feathers may line its interior. Or the occasional man made component—several nests found in British Columbia contained generous amounts of nylon window screen.
Nests can be built in a fast two days, or take much longer if construction is interrupted by inclement weather. The female incubates one to six pale blue, blue-green, or gray-green red- or brown-spotted eggs for about twelve days. The nestlings are born naked except for a smattering of black down, with ruby-colored, food-begging gapes. Just a few of ingredients of the diet that both parents deliver are: worms, flies, caterpillars, grasshoppers, beetles, and seeds. In about ten days the chicks leave the nest and take cover under foliage. In another week they can fly and warble softly, but will need food and protection until they are a month old, the male assuming their care if the female leaves to begin another brood.
Despite sometimes fostering the young of parasitizing cowbirds, and their eggs and young taken by a long list of predators, most populations of Song Sparrows are doing well, except where their habitats, especially wetlands, have been lost.
Subject Details:
Song Sparrow
Melospiza melodia
CAS 11095 Nest
USA, California, Mendocino County, Point Arena
Summer 2005
CAS 10743 Eggs
California, Contra Costa County, Tilden Regional Park
19 May 1960

Custom Options:
Framed Paper Prints with Border: 29″ | 38″ | 60″| Available with UV Plexi or Museum Optimum.
Framed Prints with No Borders (print to edge): 29″ | 38″ | 60″ | Available with UV Plexi or Museum Optimum.
Framed Prints with No Borders (print to edge) on Aluminum: Please Inquire.

Price Upon Request.

MADE TO ORDER This item is made to order.
Please contact our sales team for more information