

Representative Species Model: Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*)

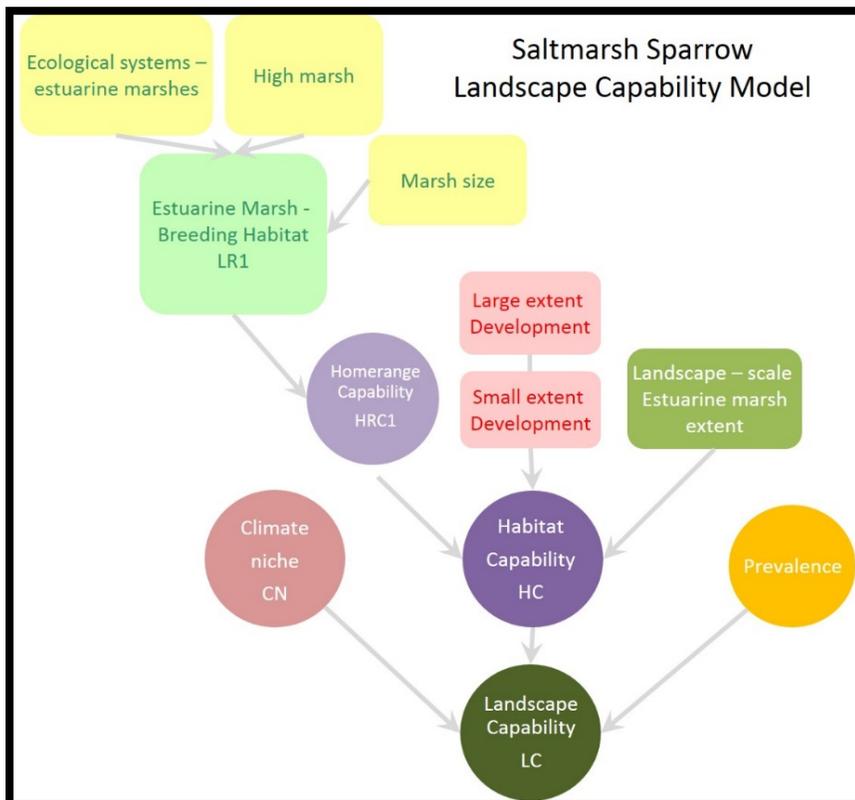
Saltmarsh Sparrow

Saltmarsh sparrow was selected as a representative species for the Designing Sustainable Landscapes project of the North Atlantic LCC (https://scholarworks.umass.edu/designing_sustainable_landscapes/). The habitat clusters (ecological systems) and associated wildlife species that it represents generally of estuarine emergent marshes. The *Landscape Capability (LC)* index integrates habitat capability, prevalence and climate suitability into a single index that reflects the relative capacity of a site to support the species.

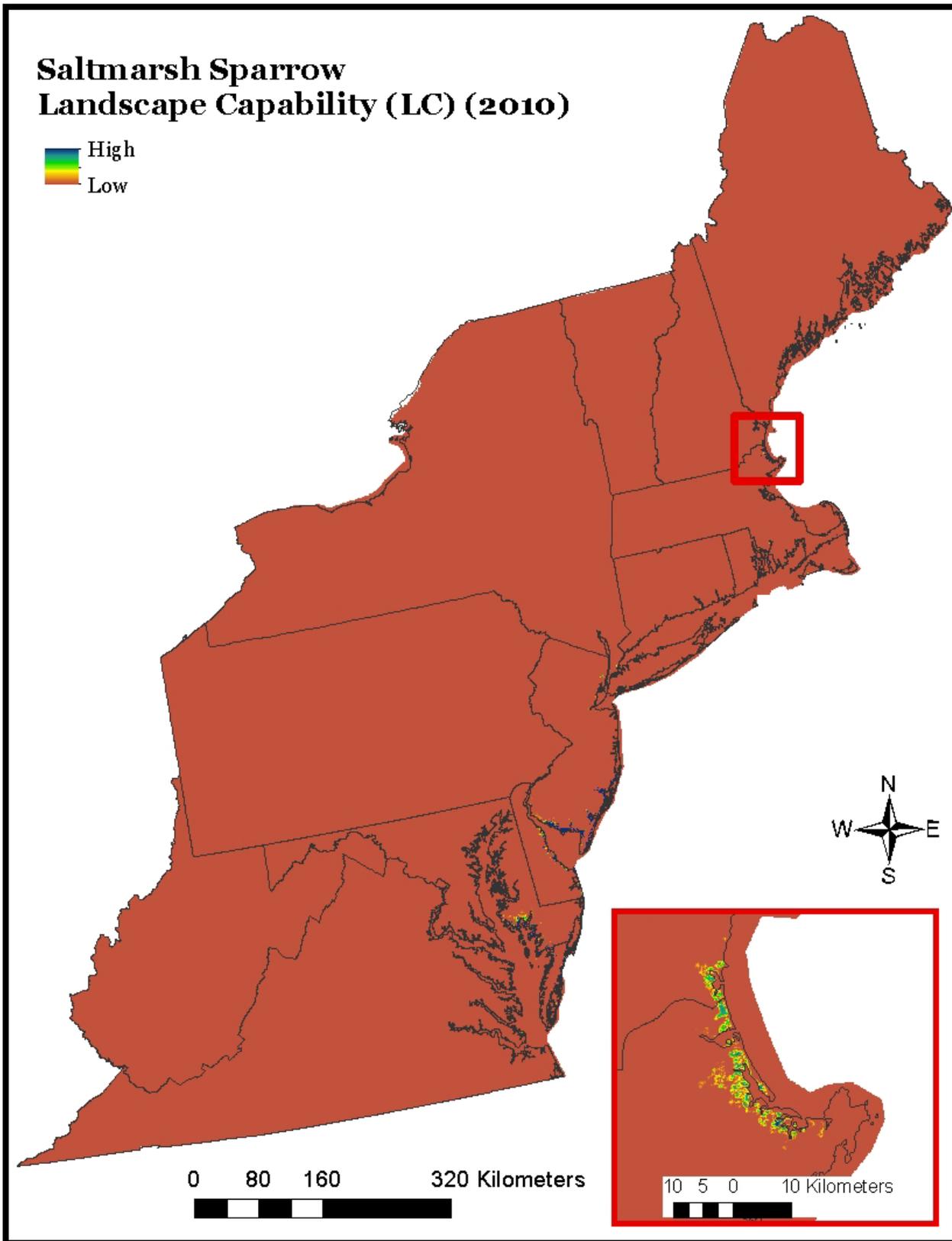
Habitat capability (HC) - The *HC* index considers six factors representing: (1) ecological system, identifying emergent estuarine marshes, representing the capability of a system to provide the required invertebrate food and nesting locations needed for breeding, (2) high marsh, (3) marsh patch size, (4) landscape-scale marsh extent, representing the amount of undisturbed habitat in the landscape surrounding the homerange, (5) small extent development, representing short-distance edge effects such as changes in microclimate, vegetation structure and access by predators that occur on a scale of tens to a few hundred meters from a developed or agricultural edge, and (6) large extent development, representing the effects of human-mediated landscape change that accumulate over a larger geographical area and that may penetrate more deeply into the marsh than the processes of local edge effects, such as population increases of cowbirds and generalist predators. The *HC* index represents the relative capacity of a site to provide the habitat needed by the species based on current scientific knowledge.

Climate niche (CN) - The *CN* index uses five climate variables representing: (1) growing degree days, (2) annual precipitation, (3) growing season precipitation, (4) maximum summer temperature, (5) annual temperature and is based on a statistical model derived from 1,400 absent eBird locations and 1,313 present eBird locations distributed through the Humid Temperate Domain. The *CN* index represents the probability of the climate being suitable for the species based on its current distribution in relation to current climate.

Prevalence index - The Prevalence index is based on the proportional presence of the species across space and is derived from a smoothing of the presumed present and absent locations of the same BBS route segments as used for *CN*. The prevalence index represents the species' relative occurrence based on its current distribution without consideration of environmental determinants and is intended to address biogeographic factors other than habitat or climate (e.g., disease) that influence the species' current distribution.



Landscape Capability (LC) - The *LC* index is computed as the product of the *HC*, prevalence and *CN* indices (see map). Thus, the index computed for 2010 reflects the gradient of worst (0) to best (maximum value) sites within the landscape that support this species during the breeding season. Note, we also compute this index for the future (e.g., 2080) based on output from the landscape change model. Because eBird data was used for *CN* and prevalence due to a lack of BBS data, this model has not yet been evaluated. We are in the process of acquiring occupancy data from SHARP to use in place of BBS data.



See technical document on species at https://scholarworks.umass.edu/designing_sustainable_landscapes/ for a detailed description of the Landscape Capability modeling process.