

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

House sparrow: pp 263-265.



HOUSE SPARROW

Family Ploceidae

Species *Passer domesticus*

Common name Sparrow

Status Introduced for insect control in crops and has multiplied rapidly.

Size 145 mm (cf Chaffinch 150 mm)

Habitat Found in towns and suburbs and in rough open countryside.

Worldwide range Europe to Asia and introduced to much of the world.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand and on offshore islands.

Description – male (above)

Crown Grey. **Face** Light grey with a black band from forehead through the eye to back of neck. **Upperparts** Brown streaked black on back. **Wings** Primaries grey, secondaries brownish, with a white wingbar. **Chin** Black, increasing to a black bib in the breeding season. **Underparts** Greyish-white. **Rump** Grey. **Tail** Dark grey.

Description – female (below)

Upperparts Brown with buffy patches to sides of face and neck. **Wings** As for

male bird but lighter. **Underparts** Grey.



Conspicuous features

- Black bib on male birds.
- Whitish wingbar.
- Don't confuse the female House Sparrow with the Redpoll.
- Has greyer wings than Redpolls.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Tends to flock on pastureland and roadside verges. Can be confused with other finches in these places.
- Returns to evening roosts outside of the breeding season.
- A late nester breeding from early October when it can be seen carrying streamers of straw.

Call A noisy “chirrup” and chattering sound is the usual song. At dawn and dusk, House Sparrow evening roosts become very noisy. The dawn chorus starts after the Blackbird and Song Thrush have finished singing.

Nest An untidy bundle of straw formed into a dome with a side entrance. The cup is lined with feathers or wool. It nests high up in conifers and exotic evergreens but also in buildings and under roofs. Breeding tends to be solitary but occasionally noisy nesting colonies of three or four pairs are found. Up to 5 whitish, brown-blotched and streaked, eggs are laid.

Where to find

Common in every town, in open countryside and on roadside verges.