

HOUSE SPARROW and TREE SPARROW



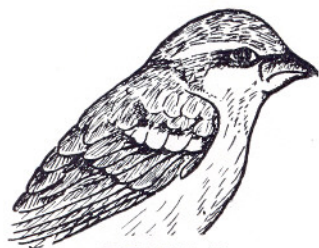
• *Tree Sparrow at entrance to nest.*

Photo: Eric Hosking

House and Tree Sparrows *Passer spp.*



**MALE
HOUSE SPARROW**



**FEMALE
HOUSE SPARROW**



**JUVENILE MALE
HOUSE SPARROW**



TREE SPARROW

Drawings by S. Beresford

HOUSE SPARROW

Passer domesticus

Male

Adult breeding: Bill black. Throat and front of breast black.

Adult non-breeding: Bill horn. Black on throat and breast partly concealed by whitish fringe to feathers.

First winter: Similar to adult, but crown grey tinged brown and black on throat and breast more concealed by white. Some birds go straight into breeding condition, and those can only be distinguished from adults by skull pneumatation.

Female

Adult: Bill dark horn brown; base of lower mandible yellowish. Crown brownish tinged olive. Buff stripe behind eye.

First winter: Similar to adult.

Juvenile

Similar to female. Gape obvious, yellow. Bill brownish or purplish horn, base whitish or yellow. Sexes can not be reliably distinguished until second to third month, when chestnut patch appears on 'shoulders' (i.e. lesser coverts) of male.

WARNING: Presence of an obvious gape need not mean the bird is juvenile, as adult birds may also sometimes have obvious gapes.

TREE SPARROW

Passer montanus

Adults

Sexes alike. Differs from House Sparrow in having an all chestnut crown, black ear patches, and double wing bar.

First winter: Similar to adults.

Juvenile

Similar to adult. Crown duller and paler chestnut; ear coverts and throat greyish black.

References

- Davis, P. (1964), B.T.O. Guide to Ageing and Sexing, Field Guide No. 10.
Summers-Smith, J. D. (1963), The House Sparrow, Collins, London.
Witherby, H. F. et al (1940, reprinted 1958), The Handbook of British Birds, Witherby, London.