



CITIZEN SPARROW REPORT

An online survey of distribution and status of the House Sparrow conducted from 1 April – 15 June 2012 at www.citizensparrow.in. The questionnaire was made available in 8 languages to enable wider participation.

sparrow stories

Read more stories at <http://www.citizensparrow.in/index.php?r=record/stories>

about the survey

The goal of Citizen Sparrow (www.citizensparrow.in) was to gather information about House Sparrow populations across India, and to understand how they have changed in recent times.

This was done through an online survey, to which all members of the public were invited to contribute.

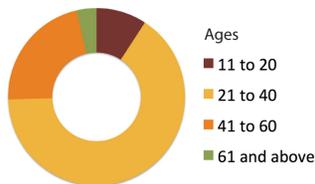


10666 RECORDS : **5655** PARTICIPANTS : **8425** LOCATIONS

Tharangini Balasubramanian

who participated?

62.3% from cities : **27.7%** towns & villages : **14.4%** from Mumbai



ARNAV SHAH (7) from Pune was the youngest participant

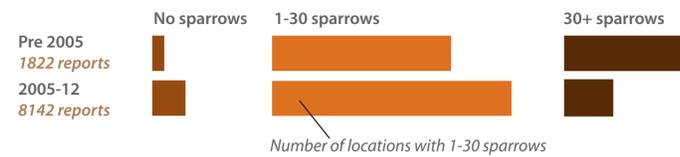
PADMAM NAYAR (91) also from Pune was the oldest participant

top contributors

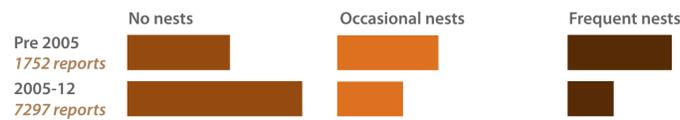
- Arun M K Bharos (657 reports)
- Bhasmang Mehta (221)
- Dr. A Kumaraguru (189)
- S. Rajashekar (138)
- Kalidas (135)
- Kalpna Thakkar (117)
- V. Santharam (114)
- Banaras Singh (107)
- Khaja Rasool (95)
- Satya Prakash (75)
- Feroza (72)
- Chirag Sharma (70)
- Ridhi R. Chandarana (67)
- Mukesh H. Koladiya (65)
- Kalai Mani (62)
- Girish Jathar (60)
- Rajiv K. Singh Bais (57)

past vs present

How are sparrows doing today compared with the past? Sparrows were reported as absent from more locations after 2005, compared with the past. Lower numbers of sparrows were reported at more places in the present than in the past.



How many sparrows nests are seen today versus the past? Considering only those locations with sparrows, nests were seen more frequently in the past, and in higher numbers, than in the present.



build your own nest box!

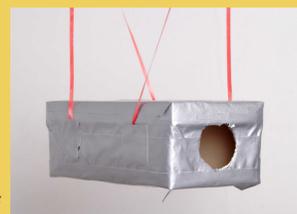
Although there is no clear evidence that sparrows are suffering from lack of nesting spaces rather from anything else, it doesn't hurt to provide a nest box and see what happens!



You can use a shoe-box into which you have cut a hole of about 8cm diameter in the side. Please affix the lid firmly in place.

Then you can suspend this home-made nestbox from the ceiling

of your porch or balcony. Just make sure that it's not attached to a pillar or pipe or tree, because then it will be easy for predators like squirrels and rats to get in.



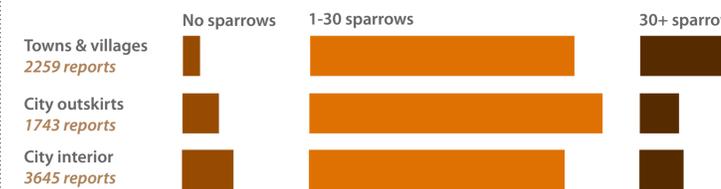
You can paint your nestbox so that it doesn't look out of place. You can also wrap it with tape or paper. If you are using a shoe box, do make sure to replace it every year.

You are most likely to succeed in attracting sparrows if there is a population of sparrows not too far from your home. If there are no sparrows within a reasonable distance (say 1km), it's unlikely that your nestbox will be found by them.

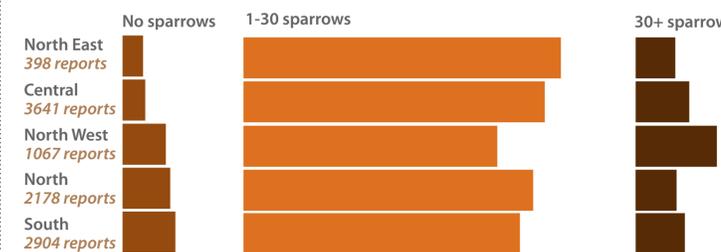
Images courtesy: www.wikihow.com

sparrows today

Is there an urban-rural divide? Look at the last column: there are nearly twice as many reports of large flocks of sparrows from rural areas as from cities. Sparrows are also more likely to be absent in cities than in towns and villages.

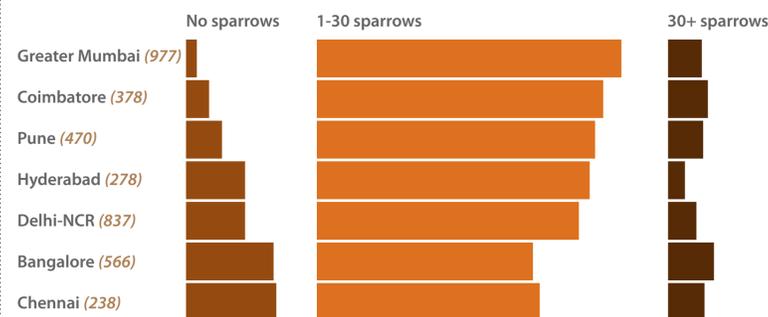


How are sparrows doing in different regions of the country?



The lowest rate of absence of sparrows is reported from Central and North East India. Large numbers of sparrows are most likely to be found in Central and North West India.

How are sparrows doing across our cities?



Mumbai and Coimbatore have the fewest reports of absence of sparrows, while many more reports from Bangalore and Chennai show sparrows as absent. Hyderabad reports very few large flocks.

Lights off for sparrows

Shreejata Gupta, 27, Bangalore

Flocks of sparrows chirped all day, sitting along the electricity cables running below our balcony. My mother and I spent afternoons observing them. Every year, a pair used to nest in our kitchen. The busy parents had hectic days bringing in hay and twigs to build the nest, eventually bugs and worms when the chicks fledged. After a hard day's work, they surely didn't want to be disturbed after dusk, which invariably forced Mother to cook dinner in candle-light. Exciting times they were! They stopped visiting us about five years ago, neither have I seen many sparrows in the locality lately.

And now, fans off for sparrows

Nita Puri, 65, Delhi

For many years we lived in houses with open verandahs in different areas of New Delhi. The sparrows would freely fly in and out and sometimes entered the rooms and had to be chased out. Every nesting season they would build nests in the cups under the ceiling fans and we had to be so careful. They would fly in and out with materials for nest building and later, food for the chicks. Everyone was given instructions not to switch on the fans but in spite of that accidents often happened and we would be so sad if the birds got caught in the rotating blades or if a chick fell out of the high nest. Now there are hardly any houses with open verandahs and I myself live in an apartment building that has no places for sparrows to nest.



Reflections and rivalries

Ritwik V, 22, Ahmedabad

Sparrows were a regular feature at my home with the little birds often coming flying in through the front door, typically in search of a nesting spot. But a peculiar thing would take place after that. During these flights, it would end up discovering a strange reflecting surface near the wash-basin. And when it looked at the image on the wall, it would find a rival sparrow there. Boy, oh boy! This meant trouble! The bird would crash into the mirror, flapping its wings, fighting gloriously in mid-air! Beaks would clash and heads would bang, and it would become very difficult to convince it that there was only one king in the jungle... I mean one sparrow in the house. The battle would rage on until one of us shoed the bird away. In the meantime, it would have left us with ample poop or guano on the wash-basin. Talk about spoils of the war!

A hair-raising story

Keya Dutt, 54, Kolkata

One day I was in the sit-out in front of the kitchen, reading with music playing softly. This place has thick plants on two sides that act as screens. I leaned my head against the back of the chair and got the shock of my life. My hair was being tugged viciously. I pulled away and made to rise. Two sparrows flew up. They had silently perched on the back of the chair and imagining my hair to be material to build their nests, had tried to tug out tufts! Don't know who was more shocked, the sparrows or I. But instead of flying off, the two birds sat on the window sill and scolded me.



CAUTION

The results presented here are based entirely on the contributions of members of the public from different parts of India. Although we trust that every piece of information has been contributed with good faith and the best intentions, the summaries shown here must be interpreted with caution. Because this was an opportunistic survey, the number of responses vary widely across regions and cities. In particular, reporting was much higher from cities than from towns and villages (clubbed here as "rural"). Results based on small sample sizes should be treated with appropriate caution.

There is likely to be an unconscious bias on the part of participants towards reporting information about locations where sparrows are present. This would lead to an under-reporting of sparrow absence, which is very likely to be the case here. For this reason, we caution readers not to evaluate the frequencies (eg, of "no sparrows") by themselves, but only with respect to the appropriate comparison. So, for example, one should not look horizontally along the bars above and conclude sparrows are present in many more places than they are absent. But it is more reasonable to compare the matching bars vertically to conclude, for example, that sparrow absence is higher in City interiors than in Rural areas. For more detailed results, as well as a more thorough description of data analysis and cautions, please download the full report at www.citizensparrow.in

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