

Abstractsparrow extinct. gone are days when house

[Design](#), [Photography](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

ABSTRACT Sparrow population continues to decline in urban areas of India. Lack of research and understanding has aggravated the rate of their disappearance. These birds being an indicator of environmental health, needs to be saved before they become extinct. Gone are days when house sparrows were the most common birds amongst bird species in India. House sparrow is one of the endangering species of recent times. It has various roles to play in the urban environment and also helps to keep the ecological balance. The reasons for its declining are many such as lack of nesting places, lack of food and unwillingness of common man to coexist with it etc.

On the whole it is an alarm bell to all to take necessary steps to conserve the small bird. In our locality we have taken an initiative step by setting about 30 Nest pot in various locations & in each houses where sparrows noticed and places where chance nesting is positive. And we have spread some grains purchased from the markets as a source of food for the sparrows. A positive outcome was observed. Keywords: House sparrows, endangered species, Disappearing sparrows, Case study in metro cities, Save Sparrow Project

INTRODUCTION: Sparrow is the most lovable, small and harmless bird.

Sparrows can be seen anywhere in our surroundings. It is a social bird. Many in India have grown up with the chirruping of the house sparrows. These tiny little grey birds have been constant companions of humans, sometimes noisy neighbors & morning alarm bells.

Unfortunately, while once you opened your windows to be automatically greeted by their calls, the house sparrows have stopped calling your house. Their numbers are dwindling at such a high rate, that conservationists are

concerned, that this species that has had such an amicable relationship with the urban world, may slowly but steadily losing its population & just not finding its little space among the concrete jungle anymore. You were able to see a sparrow around you whenever you want some years ago. But now days you have to search a sparrow if you want to show your children. The population of sparrow is declining. According to a study there is 80% decline in the numbers of sparrow. Sparrow is an important part of our life.

Since we have grown to adult by observing this small and beautiful bird. The fallen sparrow inspired Salim Ali's career in ornithology. Now this is decreasing day by day. Now we have to save this sparrow to save our environment. To aware the people 20th march is celebrated as world sparrow day every year. OBSERVATIONS: 1. In Delhi: The chirpy sounds made by these small birds are rarely heard today; and their absence, even though tiny, is increasingly becoming noticeable.

Due to decrease in numbers, a bird as common as the sparrow was included by the IUCN in its Red Data List of threatened species in 2002 alongside the glamorous snow leopard, tiger and red panda. How and why did these common birds that were once regarded as dominant bird species, suddenly disappear? This is a question frequently asked by ornithologists, researchers, scientists, and bird lovers. At a discussion, disappearing sparrows, organised by ToxicsLink in collaboration with India International Centre, in Delhi, experts discussed the reasons for the decline in the sparrow population. The destruction of wetland bird areas, loss of shrub vegetation coupled with reduction in potential breeding sites, has accelerated the rate of

decline in the sparrow population in India. But the major reason for this decline in their number is the scarcity of insects and grains which serve as protein supplements for the young ones of sparrows. The presence of anti-knocking agents like lead in petrol is known to cause deadly poisoning in birds. People in urban areas are often seen feeding grains to rock pigeons. Due to availability of plenty of food which gives these pigeons bliss of food security has resulted in over-explosion of their population.

These pigeons are now occupying the nesting spaces of sparrows, as a result of which the sparrow population has drastically reduced in urban areas in the country. Calling sparrows a star species, Koustubh Sharma, Research Associate, Nature Conservation Foundation & Co-investigator, BNHS-Citizen Sparrow Project, noted that in the same way as snow leopards are considered indicators of climate and environmental changes at higher altitudes, sparrows are indicators of such changes in the urban ecosystem; and hence can be regarded as the snow leopard of the urban ecosystem. Evidence of absence or absence of evidence Sharma added that due to lack of research and understanding, the reasons for the vanishing of sparrows are still unknown. He added: “ We still lack a large scale systematic community that pools in information on species.” Appreciating the efforts made by the UK in monitoring bird species, he said that through its systematic annual bird monitoring programme, the country has been able to generate 10 times more effective and efficient data than any other bigger country. The UK’s bird monitoring programme has shown that the decline in the sparrow population in rural and urban areas has been about 50 and 60 per cent

respectively. Sensitizing citizens for protecting sparrows Recognizing the importance of peoples' participation in conservation, Sharma highlighted the Citizen Sparrow Project that aims at creating a constituency for sparrows among the citizens in India. A joint initiative by the Bombay Natural History Society and Ministry of Environment and Forests, this project is inviting inputs by citizens on the sightings of sparrows.

The project ultimately will help in estimating the exact reason for the reduction in the sparrow population. The program so far has received around 7461 contributions from 4701 people at 6019 locations in India. The discussion, moderated by Ravi Aggarwal, Director, Toxic Links, also had a film screening. Directed by Nutan Manmohan, the film *Beyond the Mirage* shows the battle over food and habitat among the small and big birds that throng Delhi. It documents the predicament of smaller birds like sparrows, which are fast losing this war against their big brethren. These birds, being an indicator of environmental health, need to be saved before they can be seen only in books or on the internet. In Mumbai: The friendly chirp on the window sill will soon be a sight for sore eyes in Mumbai, as the innocuous sparrow is being wiped out from the urban jungle. 'A sparrow is to the city what a tiger is to the forest' can best sum up today's situation, signifying how sparrows are the bio-indicators of an urban environment, much like the tiger whose decline indicates a threat to the ecosystem.

Here are 10 reasons why Mumbaikars need to save the sparrow: 1. Falling of trees It is common knowledge that more the number of trees, more the number of birds. The spike in the felling of trees in Mumbai is a major reason

why sparrows and other birds are facing a loss of habitat. But wait, sparrows nest in buildings too, right? They do, indeed, but are sadly facing a double whammy. 2.

Lack of cavity nesting The ubiquitous glass buildings of Mumbai—the corporate dens—have replaced many older structures that were built with a façade that had nooks and crannies, even bricked roofs, which allow sparrows to nest. Cavities are important for birds like sparrows, mynahs, parakeets, etc. to make nests. This is one of the reasons why South Mumbai sees a comparatively larger sparrow population due to heritage and older buildings being preserved to date. 3.

Absence of native plants Native plants such as adalsa, mehndi and many others are outdone by fancy non-native ones like *Duranta Erecta*, Dumb Cane and others as the trend of modern landscaping catches on. Native plants are the natural habitats of sparrows, providing them insects such as aphids to feed on. Sparrows need a diet of insects in their formative years to grow into healthy adults. 4. **Absence of hedgerows** Contemporary landscaping is also doing away with hedges, which are preferred by sparrows for nesting. Thick hedgerows are known to protect nesting birds such as the sparrow from predation.

5. **Widespread use of concrete** Sparrows are known to take two types of bath—one with water and one with dust. With the extensive use of concrete in Mumbai, the species is unable to take dust baths. 6.

Modern grocery storage Speaking of food, sparrows are known to feed on tiny grains like bajra, which were earlier freely available from pecking at gunny bags stored outside older-style grocery stores and even the grains spilled on the ground. Modern grocery stores with air-conditioning and plastic packaging take away any chance of finding food grains to feed on. 7.

Chemical fertilizers in agricultural produce Heavy use of chemical fertilizers leads to agricultural produce being laced by them, hence ruining the food of sparrows. 8. Cellphone radiation The electromagnetic fields and radiation created by mobile towers are known to affect sparrows, simultaneously indicating that the radiation is also harmful to humans. The effects range from damage to the immune and nervous system of sparrows to interference with their navigating sensors. 9. High litter index in Mumbai There is a rise in the population of crows and stray cats due to the high litter index in Mumbai.

Simply put, more the garbage, more the predators that prey on sparrows.

10. Superstitions Last but not least, humans with their firm belief in superstitions are known to consume sparrows, as some believe the male species to be an aphrodisiac. WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE? In 2012, the Chief Minister, Ms.

Sheila Dikshit, declared the house sparrow the state bird of Delhi. Addressing school children at her residence during a function organized to celebrate Wildlife Week, Ms. Dikshit said that the idea behind making the house sparrow the State bird was to protect it. Students from Women's

College, Patna, distributed handbills to the public & scattered millets for sparrows. People in Bristol recorded house sparrow sightings & blogged about it. The NFS in association with the Burhani Foundation (India) started 'SOS' (Save Our Sparrow), an initiative in which they distributed 52,000 bird feeders across the world on a non-profit basis.

The Indian Postal Department released a stamp of the house sparrow along with the rock pigeon on March 20, 2010. State Bank of India in all its branches initiated distribution of feeders for sparrows. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SAVE SPARROWS OR WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF SPARROWS? 1. Ecological balance: Every animal & plant in this world has its significance. The sparrow is a member of many food chain & food web.

So as you know if you harm any food chain it will affect complete food web. So if you will not save sparrow it will disturb ecological balance.

2. Pollination in many plants: Sparrow helps in pollination in many plants. Pollination is a process by which the pollen grain of one flower reaches to stigma of other flower in sexual reproduction. So, sparrow helps in the production of new plants.

3. Reduce many diseases: Sparrow eats larvae of many insects & mosquitoes which causes many diseases like malaria, dengue etc. So sparrows protect us from many diseases which are life threatening.

4. Brings prosperity: Sparrows bring prosperity for us.

We like to watch this small& lovable bird. Our children always want to watch & hear its chirpingwhich entertains them lot. REASONS OF DECLININGSPARROWS: The number of sparrows is declining.

Some important reasons of declining arefollows: Loss ofhabitat due to Architectural changes: The traditional architecture allowed sparrows to make theirnests in a holes, roofs, crevices of old houses . But modern architecture whichintroduced box – styled flats have no provision for sparrows to nest and layeggs. Lack offood (Groceries to supermarkets) Few years back, grains were sold in grocery stores. The grainsspilt from gunny bags were a major source of feeding omnivorous birds likesparrows.

The grains were dried in huge quantities out in the open, which gavethe birds their share of the introduction of grains. But now the scenario isdifferent because of Food Bazar and packaged food. Electromagneticradiations (Mobile radiations): The scientists who are trying to unravel the cause of Sparrow'sdisappearance have identified a new culprit: the mobile phone. Studies havewarned about the effects of these mobile radiations on reproduction andfertility of eggs. Animals navigate by the Earth's magnetic fields and thesewaves can disturb a bird's ability to find their way around. UnleadedPetrol & Insecticides: The extensive use of pesticides andinsecticides in our farms and gardens has created a scarcity of insects. Theunleaded fuel, believed to be eco-friendly, has harmful byproducts.

The fuel uses Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) as an anti-knocking agent. By mixing with the byproducts of combustion, this kills small insects. Though adult sparrows can survive without insects being a part of diet, they need these to feed their young ones, and hence, the infant mortality rate of sparrows has gone up. Modern Agriculture: Modern agriculture is also an important reason of decline in the numbers of sparrows. In modern agriculture insecticide and pesticides are widely used which adversely affect the birds directly and indirectly.

When sparrows eat this type of fruits this affects the formation of egg's shell. The numbers of insects decrease due to insecticides whose larvae are food of sparrows. Pollution: Pollution is the most important reason of declining the numbers of sparrows. Different types of pollution like water pollution, soil pollution, noise pollution, etc adversely affect sparrows. Loss of tree cover: The deforestation is also a reason of decline of sparrow's population.

We are constructing modern buildings, malls, big bazaar, industries etc by destroying forest and plants. Urbanization and Unplanned development: Urbanization and unplanned development are also the most important causes of decline of sparrow's population. Pigeons, crows & other big bird's population: Religious beliefs encourage feeding of a particular species of birds and therefore, the birds like crows and pigeons have outnumbered small birds.

These birds dominantly occupy the feeding and nesting sites. **SAVE THE SPARROW PROJECT** The man behind the World House Sparrow Day: The man who started the initiative is environmentalist Mohd. Dilwar who wants to conserve the species as well as to create awareness among people. Dilwar believes that we should not only be concerned about the threatened or endangered species but the more commonly seen species like the sparrow that are often neglected when conservation efforts are planned. He says, “The rationale of having this day is not simply to celebrate the event for a single day, but to use it to bring together all the individuals & organizations working for conservation of sparrows & urban biodiversity on a common platform. We aim to build a network which can result in better linkages of like-minded people.

In the long-term, it's an effective way to carry out advocacy, do collaborative research and form national & international linkages”. World Sparrow Day, celebrated on March 20 annually, is an initiative of the Nature Forever Society. In less than four years, this popular event has been celebrated in more than 50 countries around the world; including in Europe and parts of South Asia. World Sparrow Day is not only about house sparrows. It includes all 26 species of sparrows found in the world. The NFS had many events lined up for the global awareness day like as:

- Exclusive photographs & information on about 26 species of sparrows on its website ·
- Photography Workshop ·
- Common bird watching trips ·
- Public discussions ·
- Presentations ·
- Exhibitions ·
- Bird rallies ·
- Educational & Public events

SUGGESTIONS: WHAT WE

CAN DO? It is our duty to save this small, lovable, beautiful & harmless bird for environment & for ourselves. Don't do bigger things.

Only by doing smaller things you can give your support to save this bird & our environment. 1. Adopt a nest box (surrogate cavity) and a feeder with the right kind of grain in it, to encourage sparrows to feed. This way, you'd provide them with a constant source of food. 2.

Plant native species of plants to help build a sparrow-friendly habitat and to espouse insect population. 3. Set up a water bath, especially in summer, to allow the birds to drink and bathe. 4. Prevent Bird Collisions with Your Windows: Collisions are one of the most frequent causes of bird deaths. Birds see nature reflected in the window or mistake houseplants inside the building for outdoor plants and fly into the glass. Putting up curtains or window decals helps make the window visible to birds. 5.

Protect Birds From Pets: Unleashed dogs and outdoor cats can harm birds by disturbing, chasing, and even killing them. Keeping your cat indoors and your dog from straying saves millions of birds each year. 6. Clean your Bird Feeders: Dirty feeders can spread disease.

Disinfect and clean out old seed from feeders frequently and put fresh water in your bird bath every day. 7. Use Cloth Grocery Bags and Reusable Bottles: Birds that mistakenly eat plastic trash can become ill or even die. Avoiding plastic bags and bottles reduces plastic pollution and conserves resources. 8. Restore Natural Habitat in Your Community: Birds need a place to live and many bird habitats are disappearing. City parks and

open spaces are natural places for birds. Work with your community to recreate the habitat that once existed in your area.

9. Keep Your Distance: Birds need space for feeding, nesting, and other daily activities. Approaching too closely may cause them to become nervous and deplete much-needed energy reserves. During the nesting season, it may even result in loss of eggs or young to predators.

10. Teach Others About Birds: Talk to your friends about birds and start a club in your community to teach people about the challenges birds face. The more people know, the more they can do to help.

11. Support Conservation: Join a bird club or other conservation organization to learn more and contribute to protecting birds. Volunteer with organizations that preserve habitat and help birds.

Spread the word and encourage friends and family to save the sparrow. For more information, visit [www. natureforever.](http://www.natureforever.org)

org12. Be a Citizen Scientist: Many projects need helpers to gather data on birds and their habitat. Contact your local Nature Center, library or conservation organization to volunteer.

13. Reduce Energy Use: Riding your bike or walking reduces your carbon footprint and prevents pollution of bird habitats. Switching off the lights in your house not only shrinks your energy bill, but can also help prevent birds from colliding with your windows.

14. Avoid Chemicals: Birds may accidentally eat pesticide and herbicide pellets or prey that have been poisoned. This can kill a bird or have toxic

effects on their own health and that of their growing embryos, including deformation or suppressed immune systems.

REFERENCES: [www. natureforever. org](http://www.natureforever.org)[www. sparrowshelter. org](http://www.sparrowshelter.org)

Balakrishnan P, Jijeesh N, Kurikkal MS, Maya T, Lijitha MP, Bhaskar RR, Vipeesh N (2011). Distribution, abundance and nest site characteristics of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* in Manjeri Municipality, Kerala. Technical Report submitted to Wildlife Research and Conservation Trust. NSS College, Manjeri. Bhattacharya R, Roy R, Goswami C (2011). Studies on the response of House sparrow to artificial nest. Int.

J. Environ. Sci. 1: 1574-1580. [http://www. thehindu. com/features/kids/save-our-sparrows/article4496787](http://www.thehindu.com/features/kids/save-our-sparrows/article4496787).

Balakrishnan P (2005) A survey report on the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* in south India. Malabar Trogon 3: 4-6. Balakrishnan P, Jijeesh N, Kurikkal MS, Maya T, Lijitha MP (2011) Distribution, abundance and nest site characteristics of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* in Manjeri Municipality, Kerala. Technical Report submitted to Wildlife Research and Conservation Trust. NSS College, Manjeri, India. Balaji S (2014) Artificial nest box for house sparrow: An apt method to save the dwindling species in an urban environment.

International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation 6: 194-199. Daniels R J R (2008) Can we save the sparrow. Current Science, 95: 1527-1528.

VijayanVS (2003) Where have all the sparrows gone? Down to Earth, New Delhi, India. The Hindu (2013) Cell phone radiation may be harmful, but not lethal. Chennai, India. Crick HQ, Robinson RA, Appleton GF, Clark NA, Rickard AD (2002).

Investigation into the causes of the decline of starlings and House Sparrows in Great Britain. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), London. BTO Research Report, 290.