

Sparrow Overview

Including towhees, longspurs, and the Snow Bunting some 29 representatives of the sparrow clan have occurred in Indiana. Within this group ten are breeders, nine are migrants, four are winter residents, five are accidental, and one (Bachman's) is apparently extirpated.

Relative sparrow abundances, based on both all-time numbers and 20-year means, are shown in the Sparrow Abundance Table.

SPARROW ABUNDANCE TABLE (data through fall 2004)							
Arranged in AOU order							
	Abundance Index	20-year mean	Rank		Abundance Index	20-year mean	Rank
Green-tailed Towhee	0.3	0.05	27/26	Le Conte's Sparrow	82.7	11.4	20/20
Spotted Towhee	1.2	0.25	25/24	Nelson's Sharp-tailed	43.1	6.3	21/21
Eastern Towhee	1830.3	358	11/11	Fox Sparrow	1158.9	187	13/13
Cassin's Sparrow	0.3	0.05	28/27	Song Sparrow	5565.4	1015	6/6
Bachman's Sparrow	24.6	0.1	24/25	Lincoln's Sparrow	521.0	103	17/16
American Tree Sparrow	7148.4	1226	5/5	Swamp Sparrow	2267.6	426	10/10
Chipping Sparrow	2612.8	649	9/7	White-throated Sparrow	8351.7	1715	4/4
Clay-colored Sparrow	25.2	5.8	23/22	Harris's Sparrow	37.8	3.5	22/23
Field Sparrow	3074.9	486	7/8	White-crowned Sparrow	2653.8	438	8/9
Vesper Sparrow	637.0	92.6	16/18	Dark-eyed Junco	17407.9	2062	1/2
Lark Sparrow	99.1	14	19/19	McCown's Longspur	0.3	0.05	29/28
Lark Bunting	0.7	0	26/29	Lapland Longspur	10908.7	2180	2/1
Savannah Sparrow	1382.6	316	12/12	Smith's Longspur	927.4	161	14/15
Grasshopper Sparrow	800.3	184	15/14	Snow Bunting	8430.6	1804	3/3
Henslow's Sparrow	489.4	94	18/17				
Arranged by All-Time Abundance							
Dark-eyed Junco	17407.9	2062	1/2	Vesper Sparrow	637	92.6	16/18
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Abundance Index: = (100,000xnumber of individuals)÷Total of all individuals (i.e., 1000 times %)							
20-year mean: = total number observed (1985-2004) ÷20							
Rank: = Rank order based on: all-time total numbers/20-year means (1985-2004)							

The table reveals that species with strong flocking tendencies occur at the top of the abundance listing. Top billing goes to Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting; together, these three comprise more than one-third of all sparrows reported.

A similar pattern exists for the “traditional” sparrows, with White-throated and American Tree being the most abundant. Among breeding species Song and Field Sparrows are most numerous. The most abundant migrants are White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows.