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for people
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Tree sparrow



M Lane (rspb-images.com)

This scarce relative of the house sparrow is best distinguished by its chestnut crown and black cheek patch.

CALENDAR

Breeding season:

Mid-April to August, with up to three broods per season.

Nest:

Nests in holes in trees, farm buildings or nestboxes.

Winter:

In winter, they form flocks with finches and buntings.

HABITAT

Tree sparrows occupy farmland with suitable nesting habitat. They feed on seeds on open farmland and feed their chicks on insects collected from fields, hedges and around loughs, ponds and streams. In winter, they feed in areas with seed sources such as stubble fields and feeding areas for out-wintered stock.

DIET

The adults feed mostly on seeds of crops and weeds. The chicks are fed on insects and spiders until they leave the nest.

HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE TREE SPARROWS?

- Maintain large thick hedges on the farm and retain any old bushes, trees or farm buildings that may contain nesting holes.
- Nestboxes can be used to supplement the number of nest sites around farm buildings or mature trees.
- Rough grass margins against hedgerows provide good habitat for insects to feed the chicks.
- Adopt conservation crop margins to boost the insect numbers in the crop.
- Create a wild bird cover strip along a field margin to provide seed food through the winter.
- Leave winter stubbles uncultivated and unsprayed for as long as possible over winter, ideally to the end of March, to provide seed food.

You can get further information on this and other ways of managing your farm for wildlife from:



The RSPB,
Northern Ireland HQ,
Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast BT8 7QT.
Tel: 028 9049 1547

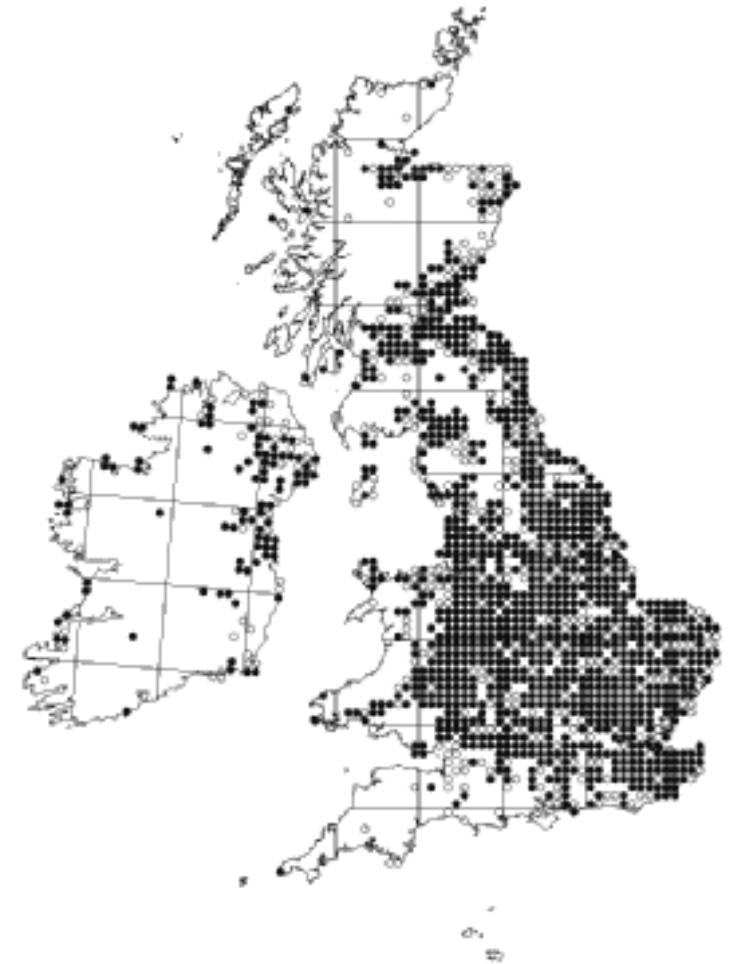


DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Tree sparrow distribution

Data provided by *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland 1988–1991*. British Trust for Ornithology, Scottish Ornithologists' Club and Irish Wildbird Conservancy (now known as Birdwatch Ireland).



Filled dot = breeding

Open dot = present during the breeding season