



Biosecurity alert: Sparrows

Tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Photo credit: Mathew Schwartz

The pest and its impacts

Sparrows are an invasive environmental pest, competing with native birds for food and nesting sites, damaging crops and buildings, and spreading disease.

Tree sparrows and house sparrows are not native to Australia but have recently been reported in WA. The bird is a destructive pest of primary production causing damage to a wide variety of fruit and cereal crops.



LOOK for this pest

Look for sparrows anywhere there is human settlement, including suburbs and rural towns, wooded country, forests, grasslands, cultivated areas, and parklands.

The birds often roost, feed and nest in buildings, with their nests potentially blocking gutters and down pipes, causing structural damage.

Key points:

- very social birds, usually found in small to large flocks
- an invasive environmental and agricultural pest, competing with native birds for food and nesting sites
- a nuisance in outdoor eating areas, stealing food scraps and making a mess with their droppings.

How you can help: look, act, report

Settlers introduced sparrows to Australia in the 1860s and the birds are now established throughout Australia, except WA. Native to Europe, Asia and North Africa, introduced house sparrow populations occur worldwide and traps set for starlings at the WA/South Australia border often catch sparrows.

Tree sparrows often arrive in WA on ships from south-east Asia and are usually found near seaports. All sparrows are prohibited declared pests under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*.



Tree sparrows are chestnut-coloured with a black chin and white cheeks with black patches. Their wings are black-streaked with double white bands.



Photo credit: Joshua J Cotten

House sparrows have a grey crown, white cheeks, a chestnut back and neck, chestnut wings with black tips, and a grey rump and tail.



REPORT suspected sightings

- Be aware of any new or unusual birds
- Note the date, time and location of the bird
- Take photographs, if possible



Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au

Pest and Disease Information Service
08 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

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