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MEETING ON THE DECLINE OF THE URBAN HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*: NEWCASTLE 2009 (24-25 FEB)

INTRODUCTION

The symposium on 'the status of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus,* in the urban environment held during the 24th IOC aroused considerable interest. Following this it was agreed to set up a 'working group' to foster exchange of ideas among researchers concerned with this problem that is of considerable biological significance.

After the first meeting held in London 2007 (ISSP 31: 27-37), a second meeting was held in Newcastle. On the first day several talks were presented concerning the decline of the urban House Sparrow, the associated habitat and different monitoring techniques. On the second day a round table discussion was organized to recommend a general methodology for censusing, not only House Sparrows but also other members of the genus *Passer* that, in a least part of their ranges, occupy the urban environment: Spanish Sparrows *P. hispaniolensis,* Italian Sparrows *P.italiae* and Tree Sparrows *P.montanus.*

A standard methodology would allow the comparison of different urban populations over the extensive ranges of the four species.

Here we bring the abstracts of the talks given on the meeting. A protocol for censusing urban sparrows will be published later.

PRESENTATIONS ON THE FIRST DAY

1. The decline of the urban house sparrow – causes and potential conservation measures

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Large and widespread declines in urban-suburban House Sparrow populations have attracted much media speculation as to possible environmental causes. Recent declines in England have been greatest in London (65% since 1994), the south east (-35%) and east (-27%). Evidence is emerging of reproductive failure caused by chick starvation and poor body condition of fledglings, implicating inadequate invertebrate availability as a potential limiting factor. We report the results of an ongoing supplementary feeding experiment being conducted in London, which is testing the hypothesis that food

availability limits reproductive success and population size of urban House Sparrows. The experiment involves feeding mealworms throughout the breeding season at 33 sparrow colonies spread across Greater London; since 2007 we have also been providing a year-round constant supply of high quality sunflower hearts. Population size and reproductive success are measured at these colonies and at a similar number of unfed (control) colonies. Preliminary results suggest that the supplementary invertebrate food has increased productivity, while in the most recent year of the study, there has been a slowing of the population declines on fed sites. We also consider which other environmental factors are likely to be limiting population recovery and recommend potential conservation measures that merit field testing.

2. The House Sparrow in Paris: results of a five-year monitoring

Frédéric Malher
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The decline of the HS in many European towns is now well documented (De Laet and Summers-Smith 2006). However, this decline is not general: there is no decline in Manchester nor in Berlin. Paris is famous among European ornithologists as a town with many sparrows: monitoring of its population of House Sparrow was decided in 2003 and we present here the results of the first five years of that work.

Parisian data

In 1962, JJ Barloy estimated the Parisian population at the best moment of the year at around 500 000 individuals, but that result is only based on a census of the nests along a 8 km-long and 100m-wide strip. In 2003, C. Galinet stated that only 320 000 individuals remained, but without any scientific publication. At the same period, a monitoring by transects in a part of Paris (Malher 2006) showed no decline.

The monitoring

Led by the Corif (*) and the LPO (**), a monitoring by point-counts began in 2003: each observer had to stay for 10 min, counting all the birds which could be seen. It was asked to describe the features of the environment. Around 160 points were counted at least 3 times during the 5 years.

Results

On a mean point, one could watch 4,7 sparrows in ten minutes: That means that the Parisian population of House Sparrow is still rather dense.

The map of relative density shows a very low density in the upper-class sectors of the West of Paris and a much higher density in the popular belt of the East of the town. A negative correlation has been found between the density of the House Sparrow and the social level (expressed by the property price of old buildings). A mean annual

decrease of 5.3% has been shown for overall Paris, but this moderate decrease comes from two different trends:
– a stability in 18 out 20 "arrondissements";
– a dramatic crash in two "arrondissements", respectively –47% and –29% per year.

Discussion

To explain the dramatic decline in the two arrondissements previously mentioned, we propose that it is a consequence of a social change, which is established in one of them and possible in the other one.

(*) Ornithological Center of the "Ile de France"
(**) League for the Protection of Birds

References

De Laet J., Summers-Smith J.D. 2007 – The status of the urban House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* in north-western Europe: a review. – J. Ornithol. 148 (Suppl 2): 275–278.
Malher F. 2006 – The House Sparrow in Paris: a centre of persistence? – J. Ornithol. 147(5) suppl. 1: 207 p.

3. First steps in conservation of the House sparrow in The Netherlands

Jip Louwe Kooijmans
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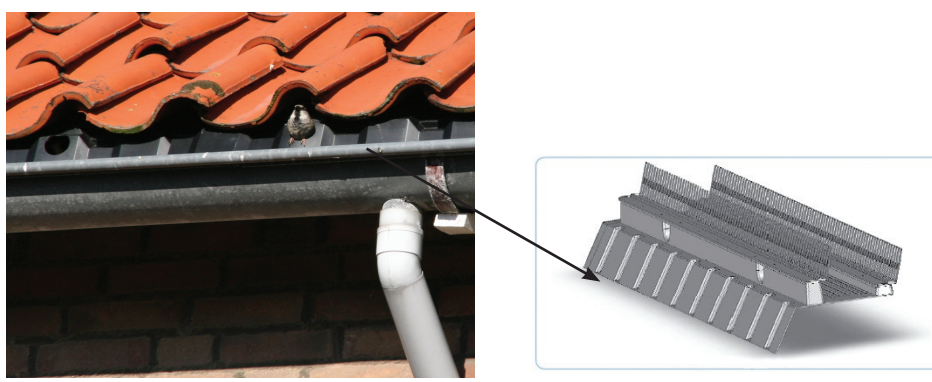

Fig. 1. Male house sparrow singing in the entrance of its nest in a Bird-loft

Introduction

The House Sparrow once was by far the most common bird in The Netherlands. Since 2004 it is red listed, the total decline is over 50%. Locally the House Sparrow has disappeared. In 2005 Vogelbescherming Nederland, the Dutch Birdlife Partner, started

a programme for urban bird species. Conservation of the House Sparrow is part of this programme.

Conservation programme of urban birds

For some birds, like the house sparrow, towns are the most important habitat. The programme is not only to stop the decline of the House Sparrow, but also to raise awareness among citizens for urban bird species. There is a close connection between urban bird species and citizens. Birds can symbolize the connection between citizens and nature, and improve the liveability of cities. The programme has two main goals:

- conservation of birds and their habitat within cities;
- raise awareness among citizens.

Housing for the House Sparrow

Disappearance of nesting facilities is not the only reason for the decline of the House Sparrow, but is seen as important. The use of eaves boards in the construction of houses, prescribed by an obligation from the Regulation on house construction ('het Bouwbesluit'), makes the roofs unsuitable as nesting site for House Sparrows. The eaves board prevents birds from getting under the roof, because nesting material will obstruct an optimal ventilation of the roof.

In cooperation with ComfortDak (a construction development company), Vogelbescherming Nederland, has developed new nesting possibilities for the House Sparrow. The product provides nesting space under the roof and meets the criteria for ventilation, as described in the Regulation on house construction. It is called the 'bird-loft' (vogelvide).

100 prototype bird-lofts have been tested in 4 cities for two years. SOVON developed a monitoring manual, with which the testing sites were monitored by local volunteers. They made one round every week along several observation points. At the observation points they watched the sites for 10 minutes and checked for bird-visits, transport of nesting material by birds, transport of food by birds or the sound of begging youngsters. The results were positive. On 3 locations the House Sparrows showed interest in the nesting sites. On 2 locations several pairs did actually built a nest and raise young! This made Vogelbescherming Nederland decide to continue this project. Last year the bird-loft was developed to a final product. This year it will be out on the market for construction companies and for the public.

Into practice

The decline of the house sparrow has raised a lot of attention in the media nationwide. A lot of local actions were started by the public. Not all of them were successful, but they all drew attention to the house sparrow and to urban birds in general. At Vogelbescherming Nederland we are aware that disappearance of nesting sites is only one problem that House Sparrows face in cities. But the bird-loft 'holds the message'

for citizens that conservation of the house sparrow needs action of people. All that the House Sparrows need can be provided by people in their own street: food (for adults as well as for young), shelter and nesting spots.

4. House Sparrow Conservation Scenario in India and Future Challenges

Mohammed Dilawar
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The presentation deals with House Sparrow Conservation Ecology in India and future challenges. It will cover the population status of House Sparrows in India. Conservation methods employed for conservation of House Sparrows in India. Need to gather scientific data in India and how it can be done.

Introduction of research methodology of proposed study on the decline of House Sparrows in Urban sub-habitats of India.

Help in the development research methodology and collecting data on House Sparrows as most of the European countries have been doing this for decades.

Future plans for conservation of House Sparrows in India. The conference will be very useful as it will help in the development of the House Sparrow conservation strategy, data collection, methods of analysis and establishing linkages and collaborations with international agencies and scientists.

Positive aspects and support from media and the public for the conservation of House Sparrows in India.

5. The Sparrows Passer spp.: news from Italy

Marco Dinetti
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After the "Meeting on the decline of the urban House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*" (London, Institute of Zoology, February 2007), the "Progetto SOS Passeri" promoted by LIPU had some advances. First of all, the brochure "I Passeri" was published: it contain some popular chapters (birdwatching, causes of the decline, action to be taken in gardens, etc.) in order to raise public awareness, and also a scientific paper that draws a review of the status of Sparrows in Italy and in Europe.

We remember that four species of the genus *Passer* are living in Italy:

- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (in the Alps and in the cities of Aosta and Triest);
- Italian Sparrow *Passer italiae* (common species in cities and rural areas of the peninsula);
- Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* (in Sicily and Sardinia);
- Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* (in countryside and suburbs).

About population trend in urban areas, data from the third edition of the urban breeding bird atlas of Florence (2007-2008) show a density of 46.2 pairs/sq. km (decrease of -20% respect to 1997-1998).

For Livorno preliminary results from the new urban breeding bird atlas (2006-2007, 58 units 0.25 sq. km out of 177 total = 13 sq. km out of 38 sq. km total) show a density of 67 pairs/sq. km (decrease of -53% respect to 1992-1993).

In the last ten years, data show a decrease in the urban populations of the Italian Sparrow of 50%, and this confirms the situation reported for the House Sparrow elsewhere in Europe.

About the possible causes of the decline, we look at specific actions on bird/window collisions: in collaboration with ornithologists from Switzerland and Austria a book was printed to give advice to planners and architects, and some collaboration was developed with motorway agencies to plan bird-friendly noise barriers.

With the collaboration of CISO (*Centro Italiano Studi Ornitologici*) we are suggesting a monitoring programme with standardized census methods (territory mapping with plotting on 1:2000 scale maps, quantitative urban bird atlas, line-transect lasting 30 minutes) be used by ornithologists, birdwatchers and citizen scientists.

Sparrows are a universal species with a strong appeal to the public, and are good indicators of the quality of the urban environment, the habitat in which most of us now live.

Recent zoogeographical comparisons have generated the hypothesis that the current population of Italian Sparrow of Crete (Greece) may have had a recent anthropogenic action, since it cannot be ruled out that they were introduced onto the Greek island -even deliberately- in historical times, possibly in the form of individuals of Italian origin. This hypothesis needs, however, to be confirmed by genetic studies on the Cretan population.

6. House Sparrow Densities in Different Habitats in a Small Town in NE England

J. Denis Summers-Smith
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The House Sparrow is predominantly associated with the built-up urban environment. The term 'urban', however, embraces a number of different sub-habitats that require to be considered separately in terms of their significance to House Sparrows. This paper gives the results of the determination of the densities of House Sparrows in five different homogeneous urban habitats in the small town of Guisborough in NE England. The human population of Guisborough has increased from 8,000 at the end of World War II to a current total of 18,100 with the building of residential suburbs surrounding the old town centre, resulting in the creation of blocks of homogeneous urban habitat of different ages and types. This is a preliminary report on breeding season censuses of House Sparrows in five distinct urban areas.

House Sparrows are extremely sedentary birds that live in loose colonies, typically of 10-20 breeding pairs. Foraging for food for the nestlings takes place preferably within 100 m of the nest. I have listed in Table 1 the three environmental requirements that I consider are of most importance to the bird with a suggestion how these can be defined by readily determined characteristics of the particular environment.

Table 1.
Aspects of Environment Important to Urban House Sparrows

Requirement	Description	Defining Parameter
General	Built-up area	Housing density
Nest site and cover	Preferred site is hole in building, nest box or tree, but creepers on wall and thick hedge are also used	Housing age
Ford	Nestlings require invertebrates. Free-flying birds eat vegetable food, mainly seeds, but in urban areas these are often replaced by human scraps	Percentage of 'green' area

Table 2.
House Sparrow Densities in Different Urban Habitats in Guisborough (2008)

Site	Description	Date Built	Area Ha	'Green' %	Houses/ha	Sparrows birds/ha
Council Estate	Social housing	1950s	10	50	47.7	9.8
Rivers Estate	Middle-class sub-urban estate	1950s	14.4	60	14.7	1.6
Pine Hills	Ditto	1970s	30	60	14.2	1.7
Regency	Ditto	2000-2002	16	30	13.6	0
Hutton Gate	'Leafy, affluent suburb'	1950s-1970s	5	90	2.4	2 (1961-1979) 0 (1980-2008)

Results are given in Table 2. These preliminary results, that need to be repeated to take account of normal annual variations, suggest that the simplistic defining parameters that I have used can separate the different habitats in terms of their utilisation by House Sparrows, not only to monitor changes with time, but possibly also as a means of comparing urban areas in different countries with different urban cultures.

7. London House Sparrow Parks Project

Jacqueline Weir
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Recent research has suggested that a lack of invertebrate availability during the breeding season may be limiting chick survival in UK urban / suburban House Sparrow populations (Peach *et al.*, 2008). Ongoing research in London appears to support

this, possibly in addition to food supply limiting adult populations (Ockenden *et al*., unpublished).

A trial is being set up in London parks to investigate the effectiveness of different habitat management regimes in providing seed and invertebrate food for House Sparrows. The project is being run in partnership with eight Borough Councils and other organisations across London, with twenty parks involved.

Plots of three habitat management types are being set up in the parks, each paired with a control plot of the usual management regime (short amenity grass). The three treatments are:

– Long grass: a change in mowing regime to allow grass to set seed and remain long over winter. This will provide over-wintering habitat for invertebrates, and grass seed.
– Wildflower meadow: cultivation and sowing with appropriate meadow species, followed by management as a haymeadow. This will provide over-wintering habitat and a nectar source for invertebrates, as well as seed.
– 'Wildlife Seed Mix': cultivation and sowing with a mix of species based on agri-environment scheme Wild Bird Cover plots, to be re-sown annually. This will provide a nectar source for invertebrates and includes plants with a high seed load.

Each plot and its associated control area will be monitored for bird use (by all species), seed availability, and invertebrate abundance. Where present, existing House Sparrow breeding populations and their productivity will be monitored.

The project has gratefully received funding from SITA Trust, through the Landfill Communities Fund.

References

Peach, W. J., Vincent, K. E., Fowler, J. A. and Grice, P. V. 2008 – Reproductive success of house sparrows along an urban gradient. Animal Conservation 11: 493-503

Ockenden, N., Mallord, J., Orsman, C., Peach, W. and Haines, W., RSPB. Unpublished.

8. The present status of the House sparrow in the Netherlands: do we still have to worry?

Guus (A.M.) van der Poel
(e-mail: amvdpoel@xs4all.nl)

The most recent data provided by SOVON (the Dutch BTO) concerning the status of the House sparrow in the Netherlands give reason for some conservative optimism. It is true that compared to 1980 the population has decreased by 50%, but since about 2000 winter point transect surveys and city breeding bird populations show no further decrease.

In 2007 I coordinated a survey in the Gooi- en Vechtstreek (a 12x15 km^2 area around the city of Hilversum). Sixty-seven people participated in the survey. They

were asked to provide food (a mixture of seeds and grain) on a paved surface in the neighbourhood of their homes on a daily basis for 14 days and to count the number of House Sparrows that were attracted to the food for 30 min. Time of day and place were fixed. The survey was performed between March 1 and April 15, just before the start of the breeding season.

The results show that House Sparrow populations in the smaller residential areas (villages and small cities with less than 18000 inhabitants) were still thriving (see fig.1). However, in the larger cities (Hilversum, Bussum and Huizen) far fewer House Sparrows were counted (see fig. 2). Compared to the smaller residential areas the number of count sites without any sparrows was three times as high, whereas the mean maximum numbers were three times as low. Compared to an earlier survey in the same area (1997/8) it seems that the situation in the smaller residential areas has remained stable. Due to a lack of participants from the centre of the larger cities it is difficult to compare both surveys there.

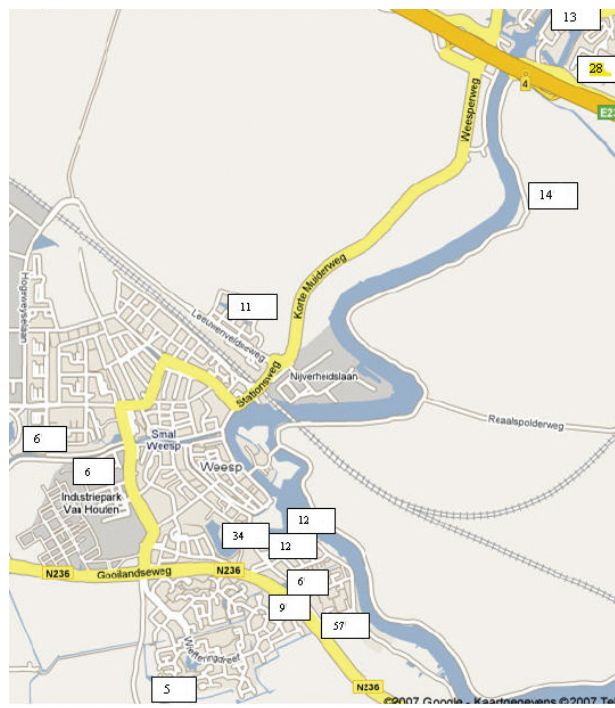

Fig. 1. Maximum numbers of House sparrows counted on sites in Weesp and Muiden. There were 13 count sites – average maximum number of House sparrows: 18.5 (range 5-57)

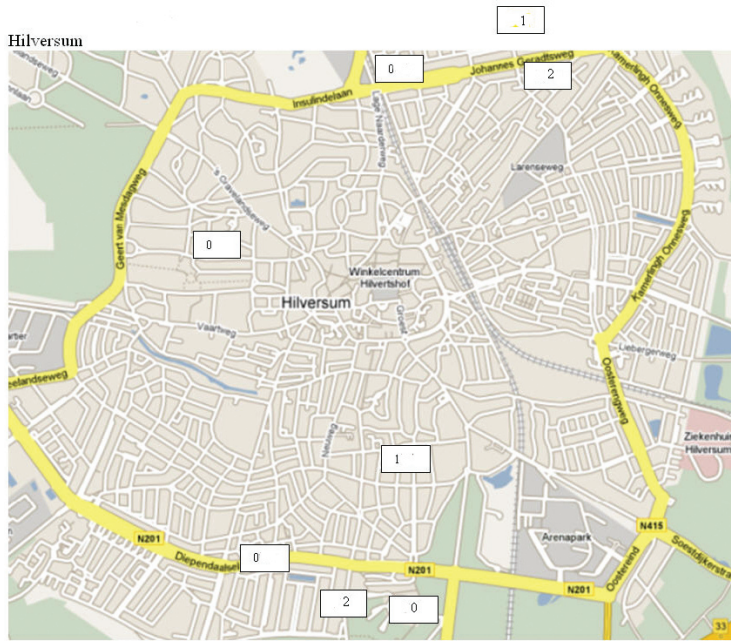

Fig. 2. Maximum numbers of House Sparrows counted on sites in the city of Hilversum. There were 8 count sites – average maximum number of House Sparrows: 0.75 (range 0-2)

9. London Sparrows are falling down… is a bug tripping them?

Daria Dadam
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The House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) has declined in London by 70% in the past 30 years, a trend reflecting the general decline of this bird in many large European cities. Several causes for this negative trend have been suggested, including lack of food, of nesting sites, increased predation and competition. However, none of these aspects could indisputably explain the decline of this passerine. The role of diseases was yet to be considered, despite their known role in population declines. This study runs alongside the RSPB London House Sparrow Project, and it aims at investigating the role of diseases in the decline of the house sparrow in London. During this project blood and faecal samples were collected from house sparrows at 12 sites across Greater London. Blood parameters, including haemoglobin, white blood cells, red blood cells, and fibrinogen, as well as parasite count from faecal samples were correlated with population trends and feeding regime of each site. Preliminary analyses show interesting trends between population status and intensity of parasite infection, and between haematological values and stages of the bird annual life cycle.

10. Relationships between home range size and nutritional condition of House Sparrows differ with degree of urbanization

Carl Van Gestel
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Both resource dispersion and habitat productivity hypothesis predict a negative association between nutritional condition and home range size. We investigated this relationship in House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) along an urbanization continuum in and around the city centre of Ghent, Belgium. We tracked 49 House Sparrows between October-December during three consecutive years. We found no support for the resource dispersion and habitat productivity hypothesis, but in contrast a positive relationship between nutritional condition and home range size in urban areas was shown, while suburban and rural regions lacked such a relationship. An analysis of the patch proximity index revealed a higher degree of isolation of suitable vegetation in the urban city centre, moderate connectivity in rural areas and high connectivity in suburban habitats. Mean home range size was smallest in urban, moderate in suburban and largest in rural regions. These findings support the view that habitat is becoming increasingly fragmented for urban House Sparrows, exceeding their gap tolerance and impede the potential to adjust their home range size, therefore restricting them to suboptimal habitats. These constraints might contribute to the extensive and dramatic decline in House Sparrow numbers in Western European cities during recent decades. Future urban projects should therefore ensure an optimal connectivity between habitat patches in order to reduce this additional stress in House Sparrows in urban city centres.

PRESENTATIONS ON THE SECOND DAY

During the second day some typical research projects were presented followed by a round table discussion on the need of a standardised protocol for determining House Sparrow populations in urban areas.

1. Temporal patterns in phenotypic markers: House Sparrows as a test case

Carl Van Gestel
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Conservation biologists are in need of effective indicators of environmental stress which could serve as an early warning system. The capacity to detect such stresses before populations are irreversibly affected would improve management decisions substantially. Two biomarkers that are nowadays frequently used are fluctuating asymmetry (FA) (small, random deviations from perfect bilateral symmetry) and ptilochronology (size of the growth bars on a feather).

Within this framework we want to compare historical estimates of FA values and growth bar sizes for House sparrows (i.e. based on museum specimens collected before population decline) with current (post-decline) ones, sampled from the same locations. So far we have measured 37 museum populations (1400 individuals) from a variety of Western-European cities and for a selection of this we would like to compare these results with those of contemporary populations. Locations we aim to sample are respectively Amsterdam (Netherlands), London (UK), Berlin (Germany), Frankfurt (Germany), Munich (Germany) and Hamburg (Germany). The idea is to catch +/- 20 birds from each of these locations, measure the tarsi and remove 1 tail feather (growth bars will be measured in the laboratory).

However, in order to accomplish this study we face several logistic problems as we do not have the appropriate licenses to ring birds outside Belgium. As this meeting will bring together researchers/conservation biologists from all over Europe we would like to take advantage of this opportunity to address the following topics:

– suggestions regarding a contact who has the appropriate license to ring House Sparrows in one of these locations (material/field assistant will be provided by us);
– suggestions to obtain a license to remove 1 tail feather from a House Sparrow.

2. Standardised Protocol for Carrying Out Censuses of House Sparrows in Urban Habitats: A Discussion Paper

J. Denis Summers-Smith
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The serious decline of House Sparrows in urban areas, the most important habitat for the species, was first detected in NW Europe in the 1990s, but it now appears to be spreading to populations in other parts of the bird's range. This decline is not only an important biological phenomenon in its own right, but, as our neighbour in the urban environment, its decline may have important consequences as far as the human inhabitants are concerned.

Despite considerable research the reasons for the urban decline still elude and there is a need for a standardised protocol for determining House Sparrow populations in urban areas, not only as a means of monitoring the population, but in order to determine the status of the bird in other parts of its range for the insights that this might give into the underlying causes of the decline. This protocol is intended for House Sparrow populations in homogeneous urban habitats.

The following protocol is put forward for discussion.

1. Basis for census	1.1. Breeding season (Winter counts do not give consistent results)
	1.2. Active nest site (Active House Sparrow nests are easy to detect and can be assumed to represent two individuals)
2. Timing	2.1 First breeding cycle (House Sparrows are multi-brooded. Colonies tend to synchronise breeding.)
	2.2. Two-three hours between dawn and onset of human activity. (Detection is both visual and aural. This is easiest when conditions are quiet.)
	2.3. Three visits separated by 10-14 days. (Covers complete breeding cycle)
3. Description of urban area	3.1. Housing density (Buildings are the most important feature of urban area as far as House Sparrows are concerned.)
	3.2. Housing age (Age of housing gives indication of availability of nest sites and cover.)
	3.3. Approximate percentage of 'green' area ('Green' area gives indication of availability of food for both nestlings and free-flying birds. An approximate percentage can be obtained from satellite maps.)

4. Methodology	4.1. Census area 25 ha (Census area should cover more than one breeding colony. At low densities this may require increased census area to get meaningful result.)
	4.2. Mapping technique plotting active sites is preferred, but, where lack of accessibility makes this difficult, line transect may be used with 4 transects/25 ha square.

3. The new Dutch urban bird monitoring scheme MUS: 400 observers counting House Sparrows

Bram Aarts
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Monitoring of breeding birds in urban areas has never been popular in The Netherlands. Methods used so far in fieldwork (i.e. territory mapping) are expected to meet with difficulties in villages and cities, e.g. limited accessibility of many sites. Hence, knowledge on trends in built-up areas is scant, although meanwhile 16% of the Netherlands is urbanized. Moreover, several species typical of urban areas, like House Sparrow, have suffered major declines in recent decades and are now on the Dutch Red List. Therefore, in 2007 BirdLife the Netherlands and SOVON Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology designed a new monitoring project: 'Monitoring Urban Species' (MUS). Fieldwork and processing of data for MUS is less time-consuming than in traditional breeding bird surveys, and also suits less experienced birdwatchers. One of the three census rounds per year is conducted on a summer evening, in order to better record Swifts, House Sparrows and other species that are not very active at sunrise. First calls for participation proved successful; nearly 400 birdwatchers responded positively within a month after the project started. The results of the first two years of the MUS project will be presented. By combining the MUS census data with urban biotope information we are now constructing models to predict bird abundance in every Dutch city. Comparing actual census data on a local scale with these reference values may lead to more effective conservation measures.

More information is available through www.sovon.nl.

Guidelines for fieldwork

MUS has three main goals:

1. to monitor trends of all breeding birds in urban areas,
2. to monitor distribution of breeding birds and temporary changes in urban areas,
3. to describe densities of breeding birds in urban areas.

We aim to reach current bird counters as well as a new group for this network.

The fieldwork method:

- based on point counts,
- five minutes on each point,

- three counts during the breeding season:
  - o 1st between 1–30 April,
  - o 2nd between 15 May – 15 June,
  - o 3rd between 15 June – 15 July,
- the first two counts are between 30 minutes before sunrise till two hours after sunrise, last count is between 19.00 pm and sunset,
- all individual birds are recorded:
  - o Differences between male/female/juvenile are not noted,
  - o Birds flying by and not using the field are not recorded.
- no count circles or recording distances,
- participants chose their own count district [based on Dutch postal code system],
- Within this district 12 points are selected randomly by SOVON.
- Participant choses 8–12 points.

A small scale calibration study (distance sampling for the calculation of densities) is done by professionals.

4. House Sparrow monitoring in Belgium: the past versus the future

Jenny De Laet
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Belgium is characterized by no House Sparrow monitoring in the past.

Just one trend analysis is known between 1950 and 2000 from an amateur in Kortrijk.

In 2002 the Flemish Bird Protection Association started with a monitoring survey for the general public. In the second weekend of April people were asked to count the chirping House Sparrows in their surrounding. In the mean time data concerning the habitat of the chirming House sparrows were asked. In 2007 the first five years were analysed.

The most important result concerns the fact that what we started as a long term monitoring on House sparrows is not possible with a general public survey because just 3% of the participants send their House sparrow data more than one year.

Therefore we intend to start with a vast staff of monitoring people and with support from the government.

In that way it is important to use the right methods so we can compare with other worldwide investigations.

Even more important would be to find at least a European basis for House sparrow monitoring.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are especially grateful to the RSPB for the hospitality in their office in Newcastle.

Also to the Flemish organisation ABLLO for sponsoring the meeting and giving me as their part-time assistant the opportunity to organise the meeting. ABLLO is especially active in working on a sustainable urban development and promoting the Lobe-city model to local authorities.

Finally we thank all the participants for their valuable contribution.