

The case of the Disappearing House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus indicus*)

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Abstract

The fluffy brown sparrows are 15cm in length and distributed all over India up to 4000m in the Himalayas. The disappearance of sparrows has been widely reported in India. The sparrow population in Andhra Pradesh alone had dropped by 80 per cent, and in other states like Kerala, Gujarat and Rajasthan, it had dipped by 20 per cent, while the decline in coastal areas was as sharp as 70 to 80 per cent. But reliable information on sparrow populations is not available. No one is actually counting and keeping a record of the sparrows. The spread of diseases due to decline in sparrow population is an alarming danger. Introduction of unleaded petrol, use of chemically treated seeds, flow of electromagnetic waves from cellphone towers, reducing areas of free growing weeds or reducing numbers of badly maintained buildings, competition for food by other species etc. are possible reasons for this disappearance. The BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), a UK-based organisation and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have taken plan for the protection of sparrow population.

Key words: Alarming danger, disappearance, house sparrow, India, plan, reasons