

Sparrow identification chart

Six regional examples | Eastern United States, with a Mid-Atlantic focus | Online Field Guide

Check the face and chest together. Age, season and regional forms can change the pattern.

1. White-throated Sparrow

Zonotrichia albicollis



White throat and yellow spot beside the bill

White-striped adult

2. White-crowned Sparrow

Zonotrichia leucophrys



Adult: bold black-white crown; plain gray breast

Adult; striped crown

3. Song Sparrow

Melospiza melodia



Streaked breast; streaks often gather at a central spot

Adult; streaked breast

4. Chipping Sparrow

Spizella passerina



Breeding adult: rusty cap and black eye line

Breeding plumage

5. Dark-eyed Junco

Junco hyemalis



Slate-colored form: gray hood and white belly

Slate-colored form

6. House Sparrow

Passer domesticus



Male: gray crown, chestnut nape and black throat

Adult male

1. Adam Jackson
2. Andy Wilson
3. Andy Wilson
4. earl woolsey; CC BY 4.0.
5. Schyler Brown
6. Irene

Comparison notes and photo credits

Sparrow chart companion | Original layout and wording by Online Field Guide

Sparrow	Habitat clue	Identification level	Seasonal occurrence
White-throated Sparrow	Brush, woodland edges and sheltered gardens	Species candidate	Fall through spring; breeds farther north
White-crowned Sparrow	Brushy fields, thickets and weedy edges	Species candidate	Mostly migration and winter
Song Sparrow	Brushy edges, gardens and wetland margins	Species candidate	Year-round in much of Mid-Atlantic
Chipping Sparrow	Open woods, lawns and scattered trees	Species candidate	Mainly spring through fall
Dark-eyed Junco	Ground beneath shrubs, woods and winter feeders	Species candidate	Fall through spring; some breed in uplands
House Sparrow	Buildings, farms, towns and feeder areas	Species candidate	Year-round

Seasonal occurrence is for the Mid-Atlantic, not every eastern county. The illustrated adult plumages may differ from juveniles and nonbreeding birds.

Photo credits and original file links

- 1. **White-throated Sparrow:** *Zonotrichia albicollis* - iNaturalist photo 339621218, by Adam Jackson.
- 2. **White-crowned Sparrow:** *Zonotrichia leucophrys* - iNaturalist photo 170917741, by Andy Wilson.
- 3. **Song Sparrow:** *Melospiza melodia* - iNaturalist photo 129376982, by Andy Wilson.
- 4. **Chipping Sparrow:** *Spizella passerina* - iNaturalist photo 29090843, by earl woolsey. CC BY 4.0.
- 5. **Dark-eyed Junco:** *Junco hyemalis* - iNaturalist photo 172110799, by Schyler Brown.
- 6. **House Sparrow:** *Passer domesticus* - iNaturalist photo 348013306, by Irene.

Identification references: White-throated Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; Song Sparrow; Chipping Sparrow; Dark-eyed Junco; House Sparrow.

This chart compares regional examples; it is not a complete species key.