



Tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Habitat

Tree sparrows prefer open farmland with well-spaced mature deciduous trees in hedges, isolated small woods or pollarded willows along slow flowing rivers, streams and ditches. In the winter they will move onto stubbles, naturally regenerated areas and game cover.

Food

Adults feed on small seeds and insects, whereas chicks are entirely dependent upon insects and spiders for the first two weeks of life.

Nesting

Tree Sparrows breed between April and early August. Generally they have 2 to 3 broods each season. They nest in colonies in tree holes, willow pollards, farm buildings and nest boxes. Boxes should be placed in groups within the same tree above head height and need a 2.8cm entrance hole.

Song/call

“Tsuwitt”- A nasal, disyllabic and cheery tone.

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Beneficial management

- Aim to provide a year-round source of food. Field margins, winter stubbles and wild bird-seed crops (kale and quinoa preferred) provide winter seeds for adults.
- In spring and summer, field margins, conservation headlands and unimproved grasslands provide seeds for adults and insects for chicks.
- Protection of traditional nesting sites is important as tree sparrows nest in colonies. Do not fell old trees unless they pose a direct safety concern.
- Re-cut old willow pollards and consider erecting boxes in loose groups.
- Adopt a range of trimming styles and hedge types around the farm. Hedges along watercourses will be favoured and additional height (above 3 metres) would be highly beneficial.
- Millet and cereal grain are favoured food sources to feed on in winter.