

Backyard Kids: Song Sparrow Profile

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The Song Sparrow is a common bird that you can find throughout much of North America. It can vary in color and size based upon its geographical location, however. Song Sparrows in the southwest are slightly smaller and paler in color. Song Sparrows in the northwest are slightly larger and darker in color.



You can recognize the Song Sparrow easily by its streaked body and frequent singing. You may be able to distinguish this species from other sparrows because the Song Sparrow has a habit of pumping its tail up and down during flight.

Interesting Facts:

Family: Emberizidae

Scientific Name: *Melospiza melodia*

Location: The Song Sparrow can live in many different habitats, from urban and suburban areas and backyards, to dense shrubs and fields. It also lives beside streams or other water sources such as lakes, marshes, or bogs. You'll find it from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, throughout Canada, and all over the United States.

Migration: The Song Sparrow migrates from its northern ranges in winter. It migrates to the southern United States and into the northern part of Mexico.

Nesting: This species makes a cuplike nest made of grasses, weed stems and sometimes leaves. Unlike birds that nest higher off the ground, the nest of the Song Sparrow is usually located low in shrubs or on the ground (1-4 feet high). The Song Sparrow usually has 3-5 greenish white eggs marked with brown/dark spots.

Diet: The Song Sparrow feeds from the ground and eats seeds, insects, and fruit.

Size and Color:	The Song Sparrow is approximately 5" - 7" long. The male and female look similar. They have a white breast with heavy brown streaks and a dark spot on the center of the breast. The crown of their head is dark brown with a light gray central stripe. The throat is white with thick brown marks on the sides. The wings are a rusty brown color and the tail is long and rounded. Size and color will differ by geographical location. Typically, Song Sparrows in the southwest are slightly smaller and paler, while Song Sparrows in the northwest are slightly larger and darker.
Song:	The Song Sparrow song has a few repeated musical notes, followed by a warble. Its call is a repeated "tchump" but can vary by geographical location.
Attract Them:	You can attract Song Sparrows to your yard if you offer mixed seed or mealworms in a ground, platform, or tube feeder. This species may also visit fruit feeders. Place feeders near shrubs or bushes, so Song Sparrows have a safe place to hide quickly if they sense danger.