

Hampshire School Nature Watch

House Sparrow Survey 2010

Guidance Note for Teachers

This simple outdoor activity is aimed at getting children out of the classroom and enjoying nature at first-hand. Taking part in the House Sparrow survey is a great way for children to discover the natural world in their school grounds.

The purpose of Hampshire School Nature Watch is to:

- promote outdoor learning
- encourage direct contact with nature and discover more about the wildlife found in school grounds
- develop awareness and concern for the environment

This year School Nature Watch joins the Hampshire House Sparrow Survey 2010. Sparrows are disappearing from our neighbourhoods – a 62% decline in the past 25 years. **Schools can help to find out what is happening to the House Sparrow by recording whether (or not) any sparrows are seen in their school grounds.** The activity is suitable for ages 5 to 14.

This guidance note explains:

- 1 how to conduct the survey
- 2 sending in your results
- 3 national curriculum links

1 Conducting the House Sparrow survey

Pupils will look for House Sparrows in the school grounds.

During the survey pupils will learn some of the different wildlife habitats and areas that make up the grounds and record whether or not they find any House Sparrows. They may also be able to identify which areas are preferred by House Sparrows.

Explaining the activity and conducting the survey should take about one hour. The survey can be done on any day during May or June. The survey can be repeated by different groups of children, on the same or on different days.

Not all schools will find House Sparrows in their grounds or around their buildings, but **all schools should send in their results** – each record will give clues to the health of the House Sparrow population in Hampshire.

How to conduct the survey

All teaching materials are available at
www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow ⇒click the 'schools' tab

Pupils will look for the House Sparrow in different areas of the school grounds and record the maximum number they see at any one time.

It may be useful to show pupils a simple plan of the school site. Explain which areas they can visit and how long they can spend in each area. You may wish to guide them to the areas that they are most likely to find House Sparrows – for example near bushes, hedges and climbing plants, and around the outside of the school building. Please ensure that children do not approach a pond without an adult.

Pupils can work in small groups / pairs, and can be given the 'House Sparrow Survey worksheet' that shows a picture of a male and female sparrow, includes a tally table, and asks 'What are the sparrows doing?' and 'Did you see a nest?'. The quieter that pupils are, the more likely they will see a sparrow!

Remind pupils that they **may not** see any sparrows and that this does not matter. Their survey record is still important. Part of the aim of the activity is to have a closer look at what lives in the school grounds and which areas are favoured by wildlife.

Morning is usually the best time of day to see birds, including the House Sparrow. But the activity can be done whenever convenient.

Conducting the survey - step-by-step

All teaching materials are available at
www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow ⇒click the 'schools' tab

- Make pupils familiar with what the House Sparrow looks and sounds like – see the 'Birds of School Grounds A4 poster', online sparrow gallery and sound clip
- Photocopy the 'House Sparrow Survey worksheet' for each pupil / group of pupils
- Advise pupils on where to look and how much time they have
- Advise pupils that they should count how many sparrow they see in total at any one time (so they do not count the same birds twice)
- If pupils see sparrows, suggest that they try to see whether they are male or female, what they are doing and if there are any nests
- If no sparrows are seen (or even if pupils find sparrows and wish to have another look), they can repeat the survey on a different day / in different weather
- Go online to www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow and submit your results!

2 Sending in your results

Please send us your survey results!

Submit your results and win a House Sparrow Hotel – a specially designed nest box that houses up to 3 sparrow families together in a close-knit community, the way that they prefer to nest.

Go to www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow to send in your results. You can submit one survey record for the whole school, or you can send a record from each class or group of pupils that undertake the survey.

We will use the results to help discover more about the status of the House Sparrow in Hampshire. **Please submit your online return by 30th June.**

Filling in the online form in 5 minutes – step-by-step

When you go online you will be guided through four short sections:

1. **Where did your survey take place?**
 - Please choose 'somewhere else'
 - Please choose 'school'
 - Give the name and postcode of your school

2. **Have you seen any sparrows?**
 - Choose 'yes' or 'no'
 - Give the date of your survey
 - Give the highest number of sparrows seen at any one time (don't worry about exact numbers – give an average number seen by pupils or simply tick 'many')

3. **Are there signs of nesting / breeding?**
(complete this section **if possible** but don't worry if you can't!)
 - Tick if your pupils think that they have seen signs such as singing male sparrows, birds carrying nest materials, young birds
 - Tick if your pupils have seen any sparrow nests
 - Tick to indicate the location of any nests, if known

4. **About you**
 - Please give your name, 1st line of your home address and postcode. This will enable the survey record to be used in conservation research about the House Sparrow. Your details will not be used in any other way.
 - Please tick 'other' and specify 'School Nature Watch' so we know how many schools have joined in
 - Tick 'yes' if your school would like to win a House Sparrow Hotel!

During the summer we will be analysing the survey results. These will contribute to understanding more about House Sparrows in school grounds and throughout Hampshire. Results will be posted on www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow and we will also send a 'Schools Communication' to inform all schools.

Everyone in Hampshire can join in!

Everyone in Hampshire can take part in the Hampshire House Sparrow Survey – families, grandparents, work colleagues, friends. We are very interested to receive survey records from anyone who lives in Hampshire, and pupils may wish to repeat the survey at home or in their local park. Anyone can go online to www.hants.gov.uk/housesparrow and submit a survey record from anywhere in Hampshire – the more records that we receive, the better the picture that we will have of this endangered species.

3 National curriculum links

Key Stage 1 and 2

- Science
- Sc1 Scientific enquiry
 - Ideas, evidence, cause and effect, investigative skills
 - Sc2 Life processes and living things
 - Links between life processes in familiar animals and plants and the environments in which they are found
 - Plants and animals found in different habitats
 - Living things in their environment
- Geography
- Geographical enquiry and skills
 - Knowledge and understanding of places
- PSHE and Citizenship - Preparing to play an active role as citizens

Key Stage 3

- Science –
- Sc1 Key Concepts
 - 1.1b Analysing, evaluating evidence
 - Sc2 Key Processes
 - 2.1c Practical and investigative skills
 - 2.2a Obtain, analyse and record data
 - Sc3 Range and Content
 - 3.3d Living things in their environment
 - 3.4c Changes in the environment
- Geography
- Undertaking geographical enquiry
 - Fieldwork and out of class learning
- PSHE and Citizenship - Preparing to play an active role as citizens

Further information and contact -

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