

BAYOU CITY BIRDING  
ZINE # 15  
SPARROW SAMPLER

Sparrows are streaky little birds with cone-shaped bills that they use to break open seeds. About 20 species live here in winter, with the most common ones featured inside. Look for them in weedy fields and around wooded and wet areas in neighborhood parks.

Photos by Ben Hulsey, Sharon Madison and me.

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LINCOLN'S SPARROW



SAVANNAH SPARROW



CHIPPING SPARROW



SONG SPARROW



WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW



WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

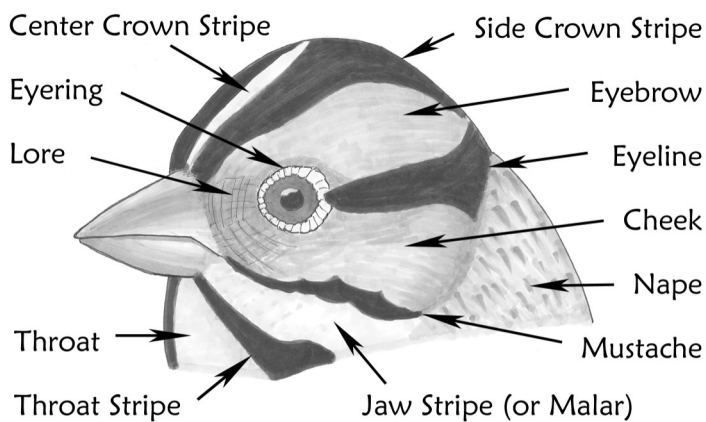


HOUSE SPARROW  
FEMALE TO THE LEFT,  
MALE BELOW.



Matthew 10:29

## LEARN MORE (jargon with the Song Sparrow)



Download more of the Bayou City Birding Zines at [WhiteOakBayou.org](http://WhiteOakBayou.org)

## SAVANNAH SPARROW

WHEN: late September to early May

LOOK FOR: Thin white center crown stripe, brown side crown stripe, white eyebrow that turns to yellow at the lore, narrow white eyering, thin brown eyeline, tan cheek, brown mustache, white jaw stripe, brown throat stripe, and white throat.

FIELD NOTES: Sparrows earn the nickname LBJs (little brown jobs) by being hard to ID. Savannahs help by perching out in the open so that you can get a good look. Study this Savannah (and the one on the cover) and then look to see how the other birds' faces differ.

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1st SEEN ON AT

## SONG SPARROW

WHEN: November to March

LOOK FOR: Take a Savannah, make the eyeline, mustache and throat stripe bolder, turn the eyebrow and cheek gray, add more breast streaks, take away the yellow lores, and you'll have the Song Sparrow!

FIELD NOTES: The sketch illustrates the markings of a Song Sparrow. Learn the names of the parts and you'll be able to describe what you see. Like other sparrows, the Songster searches for seeds and little critters on or close to the ground. Watch for them in weedy fields and at the edge of wooded areas in parks.

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1st SEEN ON AT

## WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

WHEN: mid-October to early May

LOOK FOR: Take the Savannah, turn the side crown stripe and eyeline black, make the cheek gray, fade out the mustache and throat stripe, add a bright white jaw stripe and throat, tone down the breast streaks, and you'll have a White-throated Sparrow.

FIELD NOTES: Unlike most sparrows, the White-throat searches for its food among fallen leaves in wooded areas. But even in the shadows, the white throat usually stands out. A sub-species trades the black stripes for brown ones and is duller overall.

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1st SEEN ON AT

## LINCOLN'S SPARROW

WHEN: October to mid-May

LOOK FOR: While most sparrows pull colors from the 8 crayon box, the Lincoln's go for the box of 64! Look for the reddish-brown side crown stripe, brown eyeline, mustache and throat stripe, gray center crown stripe, eyebrow and cheek, and orangey tint on the jaw stripe and on the finely streaked breast and sides.

FIELD NOTES: Lincoln's like to feed in brushy areas around water, where their beautiful colors tend to blend in like camouflage. They are shier than many sparrows and will fly high up into trees when startled.

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1st SEEN ON AT

## CHIPPING SPARROW

WHEN: mid-October to April

LOOK FOR: When you see a sparrow without streaks on its breast, you can rule out a lot of the LBJs. The Chippy has a streaky reddish-brown crown without a center crown stripe, a dark brown eyeline that looks like it was drawn with a fine-tip marker (extending to the bill), and a very faint mustache and throat stripe.

FIELD NOTES: It's not in the nature of most sparrows to hold still for very long, so you'll have to collect the clues you can as the birds move about. The Chippy likes to hang out at the borders of wooded areas.

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1st SEEN ON AT

## WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW

WHEN: November to early April

LOOK FOR: This one should have been named the zebra-headed sparrow! The ID is easy given how few markings it has. Note how the gray wraps around from the nape (the back of the neck), to the throat and then flows down the no-streak breast.

FIELD NOTES: The White-crown likes both fields and wooded areas. As with many sparrows, the White-crown sings a song you can learn by using the (free) Merlin or Audubon Birds app. Play recordings inside only, since you won't want to distract the real birds.

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## HOUSE SPARROW

WHEN: Year round

LOOK FOR: The males have a black "goatee" and "bib" that gets darker throughout the winter. The females have very pale facial markings and just a hint of an eyebrow, looking like they've been sent through the wash way too many times. Note that the males and females of the other sparrow species look alike.

FIELD NOTES: House Sparrows have lived close to humans since civilization began, spreading across the U.S. after they were brought here in the mid-1800s. The other sparrows in this zine are native to the U.S.

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