

<https://greentumble.com/when-did-the-sparrows-disappear/>

When did the sparrows disappear?

A lack of research coupled with **insufficient**¹ attention of people has **contributed**² to a high disappearance rate of sparrows from urban areas due to loss of habitat. In recent years, it has been getting more and more difficult to come across lively flocks of sparrows hopping around city streets. In the past, however, you could find those **tiny**³ birds nibbling on little insects or grains at every corner. They were a common **inhabitant**⁴ of every little crack in city roofs, protrusions of different sorts, or even holes in city structures. Over the last 3 decades though, their decline seems to be **accelerating**⁵ every year. Some cities are about to lose their entire sparrow populations within a few years.

The main cause of sparrow decline is the increasing trend of urbanization. In many urban areas, sparrow populations have decreased almost to zero. **Nevertheless**⁶, populations have not changed much in rural areas, which clearly illustrates the **adverse**⁷ effect urbanization can have for sparrow populations. Among the factors affecting their decline are the lack of food, as insect population levels have dropped due to the spread of **pesticides**⁸, and the decrease of open green spaces in city centers. Sparrows are also sensitive to pollution, that comes in many different forms in cities and rapidly increases as cities grow. In addition, according to research there is a **correlation**⁹ between the impact of electromagnetic fields **emitted**¹⁰ by mobile towers and sparrow populations. In London, 75% of sparrows disappeared between 1994 and 2010, as numbers of mobile towers increased in the area.

Definitions:

¹ not enough; inadequate

² to give money, help, ideas etc. in order to help achieve or provide something

³ very small

⁴ a person or animal that lives in a particular place

⁵ begin to move or happen more quickly

⁶ in spite of that; nonetheless

⁷ harmful; unfavorable

⁸ a chemical substance used to kill insects and small animals that are harmful to crops

⁹ a connection between two ideas, facts etc.

¹⁰ release; produce and discharge

Sample sentences:

1. With limited resources and insufficient collaboration between organizations, the practical implementation and enforcement of the law have been inadequate to ensure compliance thus far.
2. Plastic bags are made from non-renewable resources and contribute to climate change.
3. Out in the environment, the plastic breaks up into tiny little pieces that end up in the ocean to be consumed by wildlife.

4. Mexico City's label as the most dangerous city in the world for children comes not only due to the sheer number of inhabitants and associated sources of emissions, but also from its geography.
5. Increased levels of solar UVB radiation accelerate the degradation of certain materials, such as wood, plastic, fabrics, and construction materials.
6. Environmental costs are typically not included in most economic analyses, but nevertheless, these negative impacts are very real.
7. Poor quality and polluted air can have adverse negative effects on our health and can affect a range of lifestyle aspects.
8. A report published in the journal *Nature* demonstrates that bees are twice as likely to die when exposed to pesticides and they are also less successful in gathering food.
9. In addition to the impact that cheap clothes actually have on the planet, the correlation between low price and low quality does not require any serious research.
10. Wildfire events typically emit large amounts of air pollutants such as carbon monoxide.

Vocabulary Exercise:

insufficient contribute tiny inhabitants accelerate

1. Due to industrial and agricultural water pollution, _____ sanitation and supply, and infrastructure issues, only a fraction of fresh water is available for human consumption.
2. Fossil fuels are limited resources and the burning of fossil fuels generates greenhouse gases that _____ to global climate change.
3. Inside a cloud, the _____ water particles move around, bumping into each other, and when they hit each other, they can combine to form a larger droplet.
4. When air pollution is alleviated, this will improve your and your family's health, and at the same time will enable all other _____ of this beautifully diverse planet to thrive.
5. Increased levels of solar UVB radiation _____ the degradation of certain materials, such as wood, plastic, fabrics, and construction materials.

nevertheless adverse pesticides correlations emit

1. In many urban areas, sparrow populations have decreased almost to zero; _____, populations have not changed much in rural areas.
2. Some studies show that the use of DDT in Africa to control malaria has given some _____ side effects such as breast cancer, diabetes, spontaneous abortions.
3. Using green methods in maintaining the health of crops is not something new, as before the introduction of chemical fertilizers and _____, our forefathers had been implementing many organic methods in order to preserve the health of their crops.
4. The reality is that plastic pollution is a problem for our health, with scientific evidence pointing to strong _____ between exposure to plastic additives and diseases.
5. The process of obtaining building material from mushrooms is fairly simple and doesn't _____ any CO₂, nor does it produce any waste.

Reading Comprehension:

1. How does the use of pesticides influence the decrease in sparrow populations?
 - a) By killing insects
 - b) By poisoning birds
 - c) By narrowing green spaces
 - d) By polluting the air
2. Which of the following are explicitly reported in the text as contributing factors to the disappearance of sparrows? (Select all that apply)

a	The expansion of urban neighborhoods into green areas
b	The decrease in the prey populations
c	The drop in the amount of grains due to reduced crop harvests
d	Air pollution as a result of CO ₂ emissions
e	Electric shock from the wires of mobile towers

Grammar:

1. Sadly, bee populations _____ more vulnerable than they _____ right now, due in no small part to the chemical and pesticide industries.
 - a) had usually been / have been
 - b) will have been / will be
 - c) have never been / are
 - d) had not ever been / were