Photos by Mark Vaughan unless indicated. Produced by Mark Vaughan with the help of Tatzyana Wachter. © Mark Vaughan [markvaughan60201@gmail.com] Birds captioned in red are uncommon in Chicago [fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org] Rapid Color Guide # 881 version 2  08/2017

1 American Tree Sparrow
Spizella arborea
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Weedy edges of woods, weedy fields, sometimes yard feeders. Seasonal: Late-October to mid-April
Field Marks: Dark central spot on breast, bi-colored bill and mostly rufous crown

2 Chipping Sparrow
Spizella passerina
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Lawn-like areas with trees or thickets. Golf courses, cemeteries, rural yards and edges of woods. Seasonal: Mid-April to late-September
Field Marks: Dark eye-line, rufous crown and unstreaked whitish gray breast

3 Clay-colored Sparrow
Spizella pallida
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Lake front parks, in shrubs, thickets, brush in and near fields. Seasonal: Late-April to late-May and mid-September to mid-October
Field Marks: Strong dark "mustache", gray nape and bright buffy breast

4 Field Sparrow
Spizella pusilla
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Brambles, thickets, brush in and near weedy or grassy fields. Seasonal: Early-April to late-September
Field Marks: White eye-ring, pinkish bill, rufous & gray overall and rufous & gray crown

5 Fox Sparrow
Passerella iliaca
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Woodland thickets, wood edges, & in brushy or weedy fields. Seasonal: Mid-March to mid-April and early-October to mid-November
Field Marks: Bright rufous streaks radiate from central breast blotch, rufous & gray head and bright rufous wings & tail

6 Grasshopper Sparrow
Ammodramus savannarum
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Fallow or grassy fields, lake front parks during migration. Seasonal: Mid-April to late-August
Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & throat, complete eye-ring and rufous, black & gray back

7 Harris Sparrow
Zonotrichia querula
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Thickets, hedgerows, and woodland edges, lake front parks. Seasonal: Spotty early in year and mid-September to late-October
Field Marks: Pink bill, black bib, mostly white underside and gray head

8 Henslow’s Sparrow
Ammodramus henslowii
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Open fields and meadows with grass mixed with weeds. Seasonal: Mid-April to late-August
Field Marks: Large bill, white eye-ring, narrow streaks on breast and rufous wings & back

9 House Sparrow (male)
Passer domesticus
PASSERIDAE
Comment: Invasive species and actually a Finch not a sparrow despite the name. Preferred Habitat: Areas with human habitation. Seasonal: Year-round resident
Field Marks: Stout yellowish-gray bill, black bib on throat & chest, gray head & belly and rufous neck

10 House Sparrow (female)
Passer domesticus
PASSERIDAE
Comment: Invasive species and actually a Finch not a sparrow despite the name. Preferred Habitat: Areas with human habitation. Seasonal: Year-round resident
Field Marks: Stout yellowish-gray bill, brown throat, chest and belly. Brown head and eye line

11 Lark Sparrow
Chondestes grammacus
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Weedy fields or edges of woods with sandy soil, scattered trees, and large shrubs present. Seasonal: Late-April to early-September
Field Marks: Bold rufous, black & white face and dark spot on clean whitish breast

12 LeConte’s Sparrow
Ammodramus leconteii
EMBERIZIDAE
Preferred Habitat: Lake front parks, wet grass or sedge fields and fallow fields. Seasonal: Mid-April to mid-May and mid-September to mid-October
Field Marks: Small bluish bill, distinct stripes on flanks & breast and bright buff face & breast
Common Sparrows
Mark Vaughan

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Birds captioned in red are uncommon in Chicago. 


13 Lincoln’s Sparrow
*Melospiza lincolnii*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Wood edges, thickets, shrubs and wet bushy areas. Lake front parks during migration.
Seasonal: May and mid-September to mid-October
Field Marks: Small slender bill, buffy eye-ring, white belly, buffy breast with dark streaks and crisp dark streaks on flanks and breast

14 Nelson’s Sparrow
*Ammodramus nelsoni*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Inland grassy fresh water marshes and wet prairies.
Seasonal: Mid to late-May and mid-September to late-October
Field Marks: Pointed pink bill, streaked breast, yellow spot between bill & eye, strong eye-line and “mustache

15 Savannah Sparrow
*Passerculus sandwichensis*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Grassy fields and meadows with short grass.
Seasonal: Early-April to late-October
Field Marks: Bluish bill and bright orange face and breast. White belly with gray collar

16 Song Sparrow
*Melospiza melodia*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Wood edges, thickets and in bushes that are open or semi-open.
Seasonal: Year-round resident
Field Marks: Throat stripes radiate from central breast blotch, brown & gray crown stripes and coarse broad brown streaks on breast

17 Swamp Sparrow
*Melospiza georgiana*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Marshy areas bordered with thickets and tangles. Woody edges during migration.
Seasonal: Mid-March to late-October
Field Marks: Small slender bill with yellow base, clean gray breast, rufous crown and buffy-rufous flanks

18 Vesper Sparrow
*Poecetes gramineus*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Grassy and woody fields, fallow or cultivated fields. Prefer drier areas with bushes or hedgegrowns.
Seasonal: Early-April to late-August
Field Marks: White eye-ring, uniformly streaked back, pale white jaw line and off-white belly

19 White-crowned Sparrow
*Zonotrichia leucophrys*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Fields with scattered thickets, bushes or tangles. Also, woodland edges.
Seasonal: Mid-April to mid-May and mid-September to late-October
Field Marks: Pinkish-orange bill, black and white “bike helmet” crown, plain gray underside and broad white “eyebrow

20 White-throated Sparrow
*Zonotrichia albicollis*
EMBERIZIDAE

Preferred Habitat: Woods, edges of woods, woody fields, thickets. Lake front during migration.
Seasonal: Mid-September to mid-May
Field Marks: Dark bill, white throat, bright white “eyebrow,” yellow spot between bill and eye

Seasonal data is based on *Chicago Area Birds* by Steven Mlodinow.

Determining Commonness is based on information from Sibley’s, Stokes and Mlodinow references. Sparrows captioned in red are considered uncommon while those in black are considered more common. A certain sparrow can be seasonally common for a short period of time and not present the remainder of the year. Others, like the House Sparrow, are common throughout the year.

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References:


