

INVESTIGATIONS

Song Sparrows and Their Calls

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Purpose

Song Sparrows are common birds located in a large part of the United States. They are usually found alone, but sometimes you can see them in small groups. Song Sparrows are brown with coarse streaks along their nape (the back of a bird's neck); they have darkish red-brown wings and blurry streaks running along the length of their round bellies and up to the beginning of their round tail. They have a length of about six inches and a wingspan of about eight inches.

A Song Sparrow emits a series of clear little trills. It goes something like "seet seet, zleeeee, zeet zeet." I think that is a beautiful sound for a little bird to make.

I wanted to figure whether playing a series of chirps and trills of a Song Sparrow would affect the number of Song Sparrows seen at the bird blind. Because I didn't want to mess up any of my classmates' data, I took time during my lunch period to visit the bird blind. I believed that if I play a Song Sparrow's call, there will be more Song Sparrows seen at our school's bird blind.

Procedure

Before going out to the bird blind, I needed my field guide, a pair of binoculars, a smart device to play the Song Sparrow call, and paper and pencil for notes.

While at the bird blind, I played a few chirps and songs from the Song Sparrow.

The bird calls were my independent variable because I controlled playing them or not. The number of Song Sparrows that appeared was my dependent variable because I

was looking for their response to the bird calls.

During this process I organized a list of things I saw and noticed and recorded them in my notepad.

Results

It really didn't seem like there was a difference in the number of Song Sparrows I saw with or without the calls, but I did hear a lot of calls from other Song Sparrows and I was never expecting a bunch of other birds to chirp back in response to the recorded Song Sparrow calls. When I played those songs I got so much chatter from other birds that I could barely hear my recordings play.

Conclusion

Although my data did not support my hypothesis, I did learn a lot more than I expected. I learned that even if I don't see any Song Sparrows, this doesn't mean that there aren't any around. When I

was playing the calls, sometimes I didn't see any Song Sparrows, but I sure heard them. I also learned that the Song Sparrow call had an impact on other birds. I noticed that some birds that weren't common to our bird blind started appearing more frequently.

I believe that I could improve my project by playing the Song Sparrow calls again, but instead of observing the Song Sparrows, I could watch and listen how other types of birds react.

References

1. Brinkley, Edward S. Ed. Andrew Stewart. Field Guide to Birds of North America. New York: Sterling Pub., 2007. 472 and 480. Print.
2. Dunn, Jon L., and Jonathan K. Alderfer. National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America. Sixth ed. Washington, D.C: National Geographic Society, 2011. 478. Print.
3. Sibley, David A. The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 422. Print.

With Calls	10-Feb	17-Feb	18-Feb	23-Feb	24-Feb	1-Mar
Number of Song Sparrows Seen	4	4	5	3	2	3

Without Calls	28-Jan	9-Feb	11-Feb	12-Feb	18-Feb	23-Feb
Number of Song Sparrows Seen	5	5	3	1	2	1

