

DUNNOCK

Prunella modularis

Found all across the marina.



An unobtrusive little character, easily overlooked. Sometimes known as a Hedge Sparrow.

DESCRIPTION – Black & brown streaks on back, soft warm brown streaks on flanks, streaky brown cap with a grey throat. Bill is fine and dark and the legs are orange/brown. Sexes are alike. Juveniles lack the grey on head & throat.

HABITAT – Well vegetated areas with plenty of scrub, brambles, hedges, deciduous woodland, gardens and field edges.

FOOD – The Dunnock is predominantly a ground feeder and feeds on insects, such as beetles and ants, and spiders, which it picks up from leaf litter, beneath hedges, tress etc. In the autumn and winter, they will eat seeds and berries. Occasionally, especially in the winter months, Dunnocks will also pick up scraps from beneath feeders. They forage on the ground, shuffling along and flicking the tail.

NESTING – Dunnocks lay 4-5 eggs and can have 2-3 broods. From April to July. The nest is built by the female in dense shrubs and hedges. The cup-shaped nest is lined with moss and hair, and built from twigs and moss. The eggs are bright blue, smooth and glossy. The female incubates the eggs and both adults feed the newly-hatched young, but are often assisted by other male birds.



The Dunnock's sex life is remarkable; few are monogamous and most are either polyandrous (females have more than one male mate) or polygynous (males have more than one female mate).

SONG – The Dunnock's song is a pleasant surprise, it is an unhurried sweet warble which can be confused with the **Wren** or **Robin**. The main call is shrill, persistent "tseep", which often betrays its otherwise inconspicuous presence. Usually delivered from a bush, hedge or small tree.

OTHER FACTS – The Dunnock is resident throughout the UK, with the exception of Shetland. Despite this the Dunnock is on the **Amber List** of birds of medium conservation concern because after a serious decline in numbers during the 1980's, indications are that the population is recovering, but may be struggling in its "natural habitat" owing to changes in woodland management practices.