

# Bird of the Month



## DESCRIPTION: WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

**MALE AND FEMALE:** A 7 inch brown sparrow with a gray breast and a bold black and white striped crown. Pinkish to yellow bill and legs.

**IMMATURE:** Similar to adult, with reddish brown and grayish brown stripes on the head instead of black and white. Immature plumage kept through winter of first year.

## NESTING:

Nesting begins in May in the western half of Oregon. Female builds a cup nest placed on the ground or in a small tree or shrub. It is a bulky nest of grasses, twigs, plant stems, lined with finer grasses, hair, and feathers. Female incubates 3-5 russet marked pale blue or green eggs. Males take most of the responsibility of raising the young while females start second broods. Only 9-12 days separate broods.

## FEEDING:

The White-crowned Sparrow feeds on the ground, scratching back leaf debris with both feet as it looks for seeds and insects. Comes to ground feeders eating both millet and sunflower seed.

**RECOMMENDED FEED:** Rogue Select: ground feeder mix and Rogue Deluxe: all-purpose mix.

**RECOMMENDED FEEDERS:** Any ground or platform feeder.

## HABITAT:

A varied habitat includes wet meadows, shrubby borders, woods, gardens, and parks. During breeding season: shrubby areas, especially along the coast and in the mountains. In migration and winter: brushy areas, sometimes residential ones.

## OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

It is one of the most common of the wintering sparrows, seen in flocks of 10-20 birds which often stay in the same area for many weeks. The White-crown is one of North America's most studied sparrows. It has given scientists insight into avian speciation and the geographic variation in song dialects. Their voice is a high *seet* with crisp *pink* calls.

## COMPARE TO:

The **Golden-crowned Sparrow** has a central yellow crown stripe and grayish bill, no white on head.

The **White-throated Sparrow** has a white or tan throat patch, yellow spot between eyes and bill, with a blackish bill.

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