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## Front Cover: **HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*)

The **House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*) is a bird of the sparrow family *Passeridae*, found in most parts of the world. It is a small bird that has a typical length of 16 cm (6.3 in) and a mass of 24–39.5 g (0.85–1.39 oz). Females and young birds are coloured pale brown and grey, and males have brighter black, white, and brown markings. In many beliefs, sparrows represent joy and happiness, love and loyalty, fertility, new beginnings or hope for the future. They have also been thought to symbolize luck and providence as well as protection from danger and misfortune. The earliest mentions of pet sparrows are from the Romans. Not all the *passeri* mentioned, often as pets, in Roman literature were necessarily sparrows, but some accounts of them clearly describe their appearance and habits. The pictures of sparrows photographed in an unusual perspective were generously provided by **Mr. Moshe Tachnai**.