

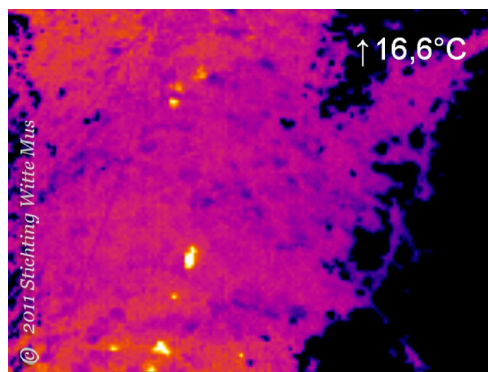


*Pilot-opstelling voor de registratie van het gebruik van een bekende slaappleats door de Huismus, bestaande uit een hoge resolutie thermische filmcamera verbonden aan een laptop, en een Canon EOS 5D camera met film-opties.*

*Pilot-set up for registration of use of known roost by the local House Sparrow population, consisting of a high resolution thermal videocamera hooked up to a laptop, and a Canon EOS 5D digital camera with the ability to film.*

## PILOT

### Research on House Sparrow Habitat in Amsterdam



*Thermal video still of a roost used by House Sparrows*



## PILOT

# CENSUS OF POTENTIAL COMMUNAL ROOSTS OF THE HOUSE SPARROW (*PASSER DOMESTICUS*), ACTUAL COMMUNAL ROOSTS OF THE HOUSE SPARROW (*PASSER DOMESTICUS*), AND CENSUS OF HOUSE SPARROWS THAT USE COMMUNAL ROOSTS IN AMSTERDAM

## ABSTRACT

Many studies show that the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is not doing well in cities, in build up area. This is one of the reasons habitat of the House Sparrow is very well protected by law in the Netherlands.

In spite of this, as a foundation that aims to protect House Sparrow populations in the Netherlands, we find that we are often too late to save the habitat of the local House Sparrow population. We can repair the damage to the habitat, but not to the disturbed use of it by the local population of House Sparrows. In most cases this results in at least a partial abandonment of the area by the local House Sparrows.

The reason we are most often too late to prevent the habitat of the local population being damaged can be found in the lack of knowledge of the exact location and properties of habitat-elements, and the use of these, prior to damage being done to it, or complete destruction of it.

This is why we have set up a pilot to investigate the possibilities of discovering certain potential habitat-elements of populations of House Sparrows. We also wanted to find out which of the potential habitat-elements are actually used. And thirdly we wanted to know if it is possible to count the exact number of House Sparrows using this particular habitat-element.

Since most House Sparrows in a population are not allowed, by their peers, to spend the night in the nest – research shows that only breeding females and nestlings usually roost in the nests – communal roosts can be presumed to be essential to local House Sparrow populations. Other research supports this. This makes communal roosts an interesting part of the House Sparrow habitat. An advantage to communal roosting sites is that sleeping birds hardly move, so an exact count should theoretically be possible.

For these reasons we decided to use roosting sites of the House Sparrow in our pilot.

We found that, with the correct knowledge of House Sparrow Habitat and behavior, as well as with little or no disturbance, it is indeed possible to identify potential House Sparrow roosts. We also found that, with relatively simple methods and little or no disturbance, it is possible to determine if a potential roost is actually used as such by a House Sparrow population. And thirdly we found that, with proper and sound knowledge of House Sparrow Habitat and behavior and a clear protocol, it is plausible that an exact count of the number of House Sparrows using this particular roost can be done. The latter with the use of specialized high resolution thermal video-camera's.

During this pilot we also found that it seems to be possible to find the exact location of active nests on tiled roofs, without going onto the roof itself to lift roof tiles and disturb the nests.