

# Black-crowned sparrow-lark

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark, with its vibrant ebony plumage and striking crown of charcoal feathers, is a true marvel of the avian world. This diminutive bird, with its slender beak and dainty frame, possesses a spirit and energy that belies its small stature.

As it flits across the arid savannahs of Africa, the Black-crowned sparrow-lark emits a series of musical trills and chirps that seem to echo across the vast expanse of the desert. Its fluid movements are beautiful, as it darts from one shrub to another with effortless grace.

Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	Black-crowned sparrow-lark
2	Scientific name	Eremopterix nigriceps
3	Colour	Brownish-grey upperparts, white underparts, and a black crown and face
4	Average length	13-14 cm
5	Average height	10-12 cm
6	Type of bird	Grassland
7	Found in India in states	Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh
8	Habitat	Dry grasslands, scrublands, and agricultural fields
9	Status	Least Concern

## Features

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark, also known as the Black-crowned finch-lark, is a small bird species found in the dry

and semi-arid regions of Africa.

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark is a small bird with a stocky build and a short tail. It has a small beak that is well-suited for its insectivorous diet. The bird's head is adorned with a distinctive black crown, which contrasts sharply with its pale gray-brown body. The male and females of this species look similar, with males being slightly larger in size than females.

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark has a predominantly gray-brown plumage that is accented by black and white markings. As mentioned earlier, its head is distinguished by a black crown, while its throat is white. The bird's wings are also adorned with black and white stripes, which are more visible during flight. Overall, the coloration of the Black-crowned sparrow-lark allows it to blend seamlessly with its environment, providing it with a natural camouflage against potential predators.

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark is a relatively small bird, measuring about 13-14 centimeters (5-5.5 inches) in length. Its wingspan ranges from 19-21 centimeters (7.5-8.3 inches). The bird's height varies, but it usually stands about 4-5 centimeters (1.5-2 inches) tall.

## **Habitat and Food**

Black-crowned Sparrow-larks inhabit open, arid habitats such as sandy deserts, savannas, and scrublands. They are most commonly found in areas with sparse vegetation, where they can easily forage for food and find shelter in crevices or low vegetation. During breeding season, they prefer areas with short grass or shrubs, where they can construct their nests and raise their young.

Black-crowned Sparrow-larks are omnivorous, but their diet mainly consists of seeds and insects. They forage on the

ground, using their sharp bills to pick up seeds and small insects. During the breeding season, they may also feed on small invertebrates, such as ants and beetles, to provide protein for their young. They have been observed drinking water and feeding on succulent plants, which provides them with necessary hydration in their arid habitat.

Due to their specialized habitat and eating habits, Black-crowned Sparrow-larks have adapted to survive in the harsh desert environment. They are able to obtain the necessary nutrients and hydration to sustain themselves, even in areas with limited resources.

## **Nesting and Nurturing**

Black-crowned sparrow-larks are known for their elaborate nesting habits. They typically build their nests in the open areas, where they can easily access insects and other food sources. The nests are usually constructed in shallow depressions in the ground and are lined with grass, plant stems, and other materials. The bird will often use small rocks or other items to mark the edge of the nest.

Black-crowned sparrow-larks typically lay 2-3 eggs per clutch. The eggs are small and oval-shaped, with a creamy-white coloration and brown speckles. The size of the eggs is typically around 17-19 mm in length and 12-13 mm in width.

The nests of Black-crowned sparrow-larks are typically found in open, arid areas such as deserts, savannas, and grasslands. The bird will often choose a location that is sheltered from the wind and sun, and where there is some vegetation for cover.

The incubation period for Black-crowned sparrow-lark eggs is typically around 14 days. During this time, the female bird will sit on the eggs to keep them warm and protect them from predators. The male bird will often bring food to the female

during this time, to ensure she has enough energy to incubate the eggs.

Once the eggs hatch, the parents will continue to care for the young birds. The chicks are altricial, which means they are born without feathers and are dependent on their parents for food and warmth. The parents will bring insects and other small prey to the chicks, and will also help to keep them warm at night. The chicks will typically fledge after around 12-15 days, at which point they will be able to fly and fend for themselves.

## **IUCN Status**

The Black-crowned sparrow-lark (*Eremopterix nigriceps*) is classified as a species of “Least Concern” on the IUCN Red List. This means that the species is not currently considered to be at risk of extinction. The population trend of this bird is stable, and it has a large range, occurring in much of sub-Saharan Africa. However, like many bird species, the Black-crowned sparrow-lark faces threats such as habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as predation by introduced mammals in some areas.