

From: Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

Date: 17 September 2018

Submission No 200 Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanous* submitted by Terry Reis

This case involves one Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanous*, observed on the 21th September 2018 at the Horn Island airport (10° 35' 26.11" S; 142° 17' 40.78" E) in Torres Strait. The observer noted the distinctive chestnut crown and the combination of dark patch on a larger white check patch. This sparrow was perched next to House Sparrow, *P. domesticus*, which have a grey crown and lack the black check patch.

Eurasian Tree Sparrows are known to occur throughout most of Europe and Asia south to the Philippines and eastern Indonesian (Menkhorst *et. al.* 2017), Pratt and Belcher (2015) stated that Eurasian Tree Sparrows became established from ship assisted birds in New Guineas only in the last few years. Although known from southeastern Australia for many decades, this species has only recently been reported in northern Australian in the last few years. Most of these reports have been in town with large port and the sparrows are thought to have been ship assessed (Higgins *et. al.* 2006).

Although these Eurasian Tree Sparrows may have arrived in northern Australian through natural dispersal, it has not been possible to rule out that these Eurasian Tree Sparrow and other recent records in Northern Queensland and Torres Strait (BQ RAC cases 196, 197, 198 and 199).

Even though it has not been possible to determine how the Eurasian Tree Sparrows arrived on Horn Island, there is nothing in the current rules of Guidelines of the Birds Queensland Records Appraisal Committee ('Queensland Ornithological Society Inc. Guidelines of the Records Appraisal Committee' Document Anon, undated) that would preclude a ship assisted record from being assessed under the Committee's usual processes.

Record unanimously accepted

This is the fifth record of Eurasian Tree Sparrow to be assessed by the BQ RAC.

References

Anon, undated. Queensland ornithological Inc.: Guideline of the Records Appraisal Committee. An unpublished Birds Queensland (QOSI Inc.) document.

Higgins, P.J., Peter, J.M. and Cowling, S.J. (Eds) 2006. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 7: Boatbill to Starlings*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. and Franklin, K. 2017. *The Australian Bird Guide*. CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South.

David Stewart
Birds Queensland
Rarities Appraisal Committee