

Harris's Sparrow  
*Zonotrichia querula*



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Order: Passeriformes (perching birds)  
Family: Emberizidae (new world sparrows)

Because of its remote and restricted breeding grounds, the Harris's Sparrow was one of the last North American species to have its nest discovered. The first nest was found in 1931 at Churchill, Manitoba, by George M. Sutton. The Harris's Sparrow is the only bird species that breeds in Canada and nowhere else in the world. In winter flocks, Harris's Sparrows maintain linear dominance hierarchies that determine access to food and roost sites. The most dominant birds are the oldest males, and they also have the largest bibs. If first winter birds have their feathers dyed black, creating an artificially large bib, they rise in the dominance hierarchy. Harris's sparrows are omnivorous, eating seeds, fruits, insects, and young evergreen needles. The birds feed primarily from the ground, picking through leaves and scratching. They will feed from birdseed scattered on the ground.

From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds.