



## Stock up those bird tables now!

**Exceptionally early arrivals in gardens of Bramblings, Siskins and other finches, suggests that bird food provided at garden feeding stations is going to be very important this winter. The poor seed crop, for trees like beech and spruce, means that there is likely to be a shortage of 'natural' foods this winter, increasing the reliance of birds on food provided by homeowners up and down the country.**

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is urging garden birdwatchers to stock up on bird food in readiness for what is likely to be a busy winter at bird tables. Many natural foods, like tree seeds and fruits, are in short supply this autumn and this will increase the reliance on food put out at garden feeding stations. If, as many weather forecasters are predicting, Britain and Ireland experience one of the worst winters for several decades, then this will further increase the importance of foods provided by householders up and down the country.

David Glue, Research Biologist at the BTO, said *"The lack of acorns, beechmast and conifer seed this autumn is going to have a big impact on birds like Siskin, Chaffinch, Nuthatch, Brambling and Coal Tit, all of which rely on these seeds to get them through the winter months. Many observers participating in BTO garden-based surveys are reporting their earliest ever winter records of Brambling and Siskin, a sure sign that these birds are having trouble finding seeds elsewhere."*

Mike Toms, BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Organiser, said *"Reports from our network of over 16,000 Garden BirdWatchers suggest that gardens are going to become increasingly busy over the next few weeks. Once we get a run of a few cold nights, the numbers of birds using garden feeding stations will quickly increase. So, now is the time to stock up on birdfood. Sunflower hearts, black sunflower seed and high-energy seed mixes are ideal foods to provide in your garden. By using a range of different foods, and a combination of hanging feeders and bird tables, it is possible to attract a range of birds to your garden."*

The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Team has produced a leaflet giving advice on bird feeding, what to feed and how to attract a range of species. A free copy of this leaflet can be obtained by writing to GBW Feeding Leaflet, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, by telephoning 01842-750050 or by emailing [gbw@bto.org](mailto:gbw@bto.org).

### MORE

The BTO is the UK's leading bird research organisation. Over thirty thousand birdwatchers contribute to the BTO's surveys. They collect information that forms the basis of conservation action in the UK. The BTO maintains a staff of 80 at its HQ in Norfolk, who analyse and publicise the results of project work. The BTO's investigations are funded by government, industry and conservation organisations.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

- 1. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch.** The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch is the only nationwide survey of garden birds to run weekly throughout the year, providing important information on how birds use gardens and how this use changes over time. Currently, some 16,500 people take part in the project. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch is funded through participants' contributions, supported by CJ WildBird Foods Ltd, and is the largest year round survey of garden birds anywhere in the world. For more information see [www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw)
- 2. CJ WildBird Foods.** CJ WildBird Foods is Europe's leading supplier of bird food and feeding products. CJ WildBird Foods has been responsible for a number of significant developments within the bird food and feeding industry, including the introduction of black sunflower seed to the UK as a major new bird food and the development of specialist seed mixes for use in tubular feeders. The company has also been supporting research into the changing fortunes of garden bird populations, most notably through the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch.
- 3. Radio Interviews.** The BTO has a dedicated ISDN line available for radio interviews. Please call 01842-750050 to make a booking for a radio interview.
- 4. Colour photographs.** Images of garden birds are freely available for use in association with this press release. Please email [images@bto.org](mailto:images@bto.org) to request an electronic version.

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