



## Something weird in your neighbourhood?

**Eagle Owls, Himalayan pheasants and tropical sunbirds. It may sound like a list of birds that you saw on your last trip abroad but all these, and other equally unlikely species, have been recorded in British gardens. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey has been monitoring the weird and wonderful bird life of the UK's gardens for 10 years and would like more people to report the strange things they see.**

When one thinks of a typical British garden, images of singing Blackbirds and hopping Robins are probably what springs to mind, but there is a whole other set of birds present in gardens that are more exotic in nature and are reported on a regular basis.

*"We often get reports of strange birds from gardens. Usually they turn out to be just something unfamiliar to the owner but sometimes we find the most improbable species in the most bizarre places. We now know to expect the unexpected,"* says Martin Fowlie of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Team.

Tragopan pheasants from the Himalayas, sunbirds from southeast Asia and weaverbirds from Africa have all been reported from gardens and a few people have been given a bit of a shock by the sight of a huge Eagle Owl sitting on their lawn. Photographs of these exotic birds regularly appear in *Bird Table*, the Garden BirdWatch magazine.

*"Ring-necked Parakeets are now well established in southeast England but there are another 20 species of parrot that have been recorded in the UK. It is important that we know if, how and where these populations establish,"* Martin adds. *"What will be the next species to gain a foothold in the UK? Could it be another parrot, the Eagle Owl or something we don't even know about yet? We need people's help to record these birds so that we can find out what's happening, so why not get in contact with Garden BirdWatch and tell us what you see in your garden."*

So, always be on the look out for strange things in your garden and if you see something weird...you know who to call!

The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch needs your help to monitor the occurrence of these birds in the UK's gardens. To receive a free information pack, phone on 01842 750050, write to GBW, Room 1, British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, or email [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) 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 across the British Isles. BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch is funded by participants' contributions and 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 is Europe's leading supplier of bird food and bird 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 seeds 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) **Bird Table Magazine.** Bird Table magazine is published quarterly and sent free to all BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatchers. An annual subscription to the project costs just £12 and all new joiners will receive a free copy of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Book (which normally retails for £9.99).
- 4) **Colour photographs.** Images of exotic birds such as Ring-necked Parakeet, Crimson Rosella and Black Swan are freely available for use in association with this press release. Please contact [images@bto.org](mailto:images@bto.org) to request an electronic version.
- 5) **Radio Interviews.** The BTO has a dedicated ISDN line available for radio interviews.

**For further information please contact:**

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