



Big Garden Birdwatch: the results

Today sees the results released from this year's RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. The results come from a staggering 470,000 people watching in over 270,000 gardens, an amazing achievement. Comparing these results to those from the year round BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey throws up some expected similarities and some interesting differences.

The RSPB has announced the results of the 2006 Big Garden Birdwatch collected by almost half a million people. Whilst the top three most widespread bird species are the same between this and the year round BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey other species in the top ten differ between the two surveys.

"Although the top three species are the same between the two surveys there are some really interesting differences. When we look at our results from January, we have the Dunnock at number five but it doesn't feature in the Big Garden BirdWatch Top Ten. It is a species of conservation concern as it has shown worrying declines in recent years," says Martin Fowlie, of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Team.

Dunnocks are quite wary birds, fond of staying close to cover and these may just not get noticed as much during the Big Garden Birdwatch's one-hour survey in late January. On the flip side, Woodpigeons are big, obvious, noisy birds and make it to number seven in the RSPB top ten but only make it to number 13 in the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch list.

"Birds also change the way they use gardens depending on the season. For species such as the Long-tailed Tit, winter is the time that they are most commonly encountered in gardens. For Song Thrushes it is the early spring, to coincide with the emergence of snails and other invertebrates. So depending on when you take your 'snap shot' of garden birds you'll see very obvious differences in the visitors to your garden," Martin adds.

The BTO scheme needs more people across the UK to record the occurrence of birds in their gardens. It has been running its Garden BirdWatch survey since 1995 and has highlighted changes in the use of the nation's gardens by different bird species. Over 16,500 participants currently take part in Garden BirdWatch in the UK and send in simple weekly records of the bird species using their gardens. To receive a free information pack, phone on 01842 750050, email gbw@bto.org or write to GBW, Room 12, British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU.

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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 across the UK. The 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
- 2) **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).
- 3) **CJ WildBird Foods.** 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.
- 4) **Colour photographs.** Images of garden birds are freely available for use in association with this press release. Please contact images@bto.org to request an electronic version.
- 5) The BTO has an ISDN line available for radio interviews.
- 6) The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch top 10 garden species for January to March and the percentage of gardens in which they are recorded.

No.	Species	% of gardens
1	Blackbird	98
2	Blue Tit	97
3	Robin	92
4	Chaffinch	84
5	Dunnock	83

No.	Species	% of gardens
6	Great Tit	83
7	House Sparrow	82
8	Starling	79
9	Greenfinch	79
10	Collared Dove	72

For further information please contact:

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