



Gardens: good for birds?

The simple answer is yes they are, but what species use them and in what numbers depends on where you are in the country. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey is now in its 12th year and has been keeping a close eye on the comings and goings of Britain's garden birds. The next step is to look at a local level so we can see which birds are doing best in different parts of the country. The BTO needs more garden owners to help record birds in private gardens in Shropshire.

Birds are everywhere, but our first daily contact with them is usually over our mug of morning tea as we look out into our gardens. These spaces provide a valuable habitat not only for birds but also for a wealth of other wildlife. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey has been monitoring the use of gardens by birds for over a decade and has built up a fantastic nationwide picture of what is going on. We need your help to turn the focus towards what is happening at the local level so we can look for differences between regions.

“Gardens are an incredibly important habitat for birds and Shropshire is no exception. With spring underway, birds will be using our gardens as a source of food and also for nesting in,” says Martin Fowlie of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch team.

Across the UK, the Blackbird is the most frequently encountered garden bird, but does it rank as number one in Shropshire gardens?

“It would be great to look at the local level to see if Shropshire differs from neighbouring counties and also to see if there are differences within Shropshire. To do this we really need more people sending in records from Shropshire. It is a great way to take part in an interesting survey and to contribute, along with thousands of others, to an important monitoring scheme,” Martin adds.

The BTO scheme needs people in Shropshire 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. Some 126 participants currently take part in Garden BirdWatch in Shropshire and send in simple weekly records of the bird species using their gardens. To receive a free information pack, phone on 01842 750050 or write to GBW, Room 31, 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.

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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 with 126 in Shropshire. 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) **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.
- 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) The top 10 UK garden species and the percentage of gardens in which they are recorded

No.	Species	% of gardens
1	Blackbird	97
2	Blue Tit	90
3	Robin	81
4	Greenfinch	79
5	Woodpigeon	79

No.	Species	% of gardens
6	Collared Dove	79
7	Dunnock	77
8	House Sparrow	76
9	Chaffinch	75
10	Great Tit	74

- 5) The BTO has an ISDN line available for radio interviews.

For further information please contact:

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