



Is winter still here?



The weather is warmer and birds are now breeding but there are still reports of birds that are considered winter visitors coming from the nation's gardens. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey needs your help to find out what is going on!

A very cold start to spring has meant that things have taken time to get going this year. Summer migrants have arrived later and flowering plants and butterflies haven't made much of an appearance yet. However, spring has now seemingly sprung with Swallows, Cuckoos and warblers all making a welcome return, but the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey is still getting reports of garden birds that are essentially considered winter visitors and need your help to get the fuller picture.

"For the last couple of weeks we have been getting good numbers of Bramblings being reported from peoples' gardens," says Martin Fowlie of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Team. *"These are close relatives of the familiar Chaffinch that should be returning to northern Europe to breed but they seem to be lingering slightly longer than usual."*

Reports of Fieldfares and Siskins have also been coming in, both species that will be leaving gardens to breed elsewhere. So what's going on?

"This winter hasn't been great for natural food such as seeds and berries. What's probably happening is that these birds are making good use of all the food being put out by people in gardens before making the journey back north to breed," Martin adds.

We want to hear from people that still have Bramblings, Siskins and Fieldfares in their gardens. Phone Garden BirdWatch on 01842 750050, email gbw@bto.org or write to GBW, 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, more than 16,000 people take part in the project. 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) **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.
- 3) **Bird Identification.** For information on Bramblings, Siskins and Fieldfares and what they look like go to www.bto.org/birdfacts
- 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.

For further information please contact:

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