



Armchair Birdwatchers needed in Devon Can you tell a Blue Tit from a Blackbird?

The BBC's Springwatch is in full swing in Devon and the Nation is tuning in to the fortunes of many of the county's inhabitants. From Barn Owls to Great Tits, Devon's birds are becoming real celebrities. Gardens are an incredibly important habitat for many of the Devon's bird species. They are used not only for feeding but also as a safe place to breed and raise a family. The BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch survey needs people in Devon to keep a record of the birds that they see and, by doing so, help to monitor the changing fortunes of Britain's garden birds.

Gardens are becoming increasingly important places for all sorts of wildlife and many people take an active interest in the wide range of bird species that use their gardens. Some people put out food, others erect nest boxes and some keep a simple record of their feathered visitors. We need more people in Devon to tell us about the common birds living in and visiting their gardens.

"In the UK, lots of people are really clued up on the birds that visit their gardens. Providing food and watching the results is a really popular pastime. This passion is highlighted by the large numbers of people that are tuning into the BBC's Springwatch programme," says Martin Fowlie of the BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch team.

But do you make a note of what visits your garden? If so, then you could be helping to keep tabs on the fortunes of Britain's birds.

"Making simple notes of what you see in your garden can help us monitor what is happening to birds in gardens. Why not make these count and join in the largest survey of its kind in the world. The more people in Devon that take part the better idea we will have about what is happening to the county's birds," Martin adds.

The BTO scheme needs people in Devon 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 386 participants currently take part in Garden BirdWatch in Devon and send in simple weekly records of the bird species using their gardens. **To receive a free information pack about the survey, please send your name and address details to GBW Devon, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, email gbw@bto.org or telephone 01842-750050.**

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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 386 in Devon. 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 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 garden birds are freely available for use in association with this press release. Please contact images@bto.org to request an electronic version.
- 5) **Bird Information.** For lots of facts and figures about garden birds go to www.bto.org/birdfacts and for a list of the most frequently seen birds in Devon's gardens go to <http://blx1.bto.org/gbw-dailyresults/results/gbwrt-pcode-GBDEV.html>
- 6) For more information on BBC's Springwatch go to www.bbc.co.uk/springwatch
- 7) The BTO has an ISDN line available for radio interviews.

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