



Bird Watch April



Welcome to this month's Bird Watch. I'm one of two volunteer Ambassadors for the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Garden BirdWatch scheme in South Wales. Each month I introduce you to a bird or other animal that you might see in your garden.

Bird of the Month: Collared Dove

Whilst many birds are just starting their breeding season this month, the Collared Dove's season extends from February to October. This enables the species to have two to five broods (each of two young) per year – they can even start incubating another brood before the previous one has fledged! You might see the male advertising his territory in your neighbourhood with a display flight consisting of a steep climb, followed by a glide (often spiral), with the tail well-spread.

The Collared Dove is sleek in appearance, except when fluffed up against the cold, and is generally buff-grey in colour. Males may show a soft pink flush to their plumage. The Collared Dove is easily identifiable by a black and white collar on the nape of its neck and a white ring around its eye. Their call has been likened to the football chant 'Un-i-ted' (or 'ku-koo-ku'). It's interesting to observe these birds drinking. Whilst most birds drink by taking a sip and lifting their head to swallow, the Collared Dove keeps its head down – similar to a dog or a cat – and sucks up the water.

Did you know?

- Collared Doves were first reported breeding in Britain during the 1950s, having dispersed from their native Turkey and the Balkans, and have become one of our most familiar garden birds.
- The Collared Dove has become known as the 'television dove' in Germany due to its habit of calling from rooftop aerials!
- The Welsh name is *Turtur Dorchog*.

How to attract them to your garden: Grain, seeds, fruit and bread (in small amounts) fed from the ground or bird table.

Conservation status: **Green** (no cause for concern).

BTO Garden BirdWatch data show that Collared Doves are fairly constant in their use of gardens throughout the year. There has been a slight decrease in recent years, the reasons behind which are unclear.

Make Your Garden Count!

If you enjoy watching birds and other creatures in your garden, and want to help track their fortunes, then BTO Garden BirdWatch could be perfect for you. Please contact me for a free enquiry pack or to book a talk (Swansea and surrounding areas).

Happy Garden Bird Watching!

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Collared Doves: Russ Myners