



Bird Watch June



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: Song Thrush

It is now the height of the Song Thrush's breeding season. They have two to four broods every year, but only the female incubates the eggs and young; the male is still busy defending his territory through song. The song is made up of a series of phrases, many of which are repeated three times, and may contain human sounds such as alarms and telephones. The pauses between phrases allow the male to listen for any answering males in the vicinity. Once the young have fledged, the male takes an active part in their rearing. In a process known as 'brood splitting' the parents divide the young between them, taking sole charge of the fledglings assigned to them. The Song Thrush is warm-brown in colour with arrow shaped spots on its front. It has a long-legged, upright stance, and is slightly smaller than a Blackbird. It often follows a series of quick hops with a short run, as if to prevent itself from over-balancing and falling over.

Did you know?

- The Song Thrush is the only British species to have mastered how to crack open a snail shell. It beats the snail against a hard surface, i.e. an 'anvil', with a quick sideways flick of the head. Snails are taken as an emergency food when earthworms are harder to find.
- The 'tic' call of the Song Thrush is rather like the sound made by a free-wheeling bicycle wheel.
- The Welsh name is *Bronfraith*, meaning mottled breast.

How to attract them to your garden: Song Thrushes eat invertebrates, fruit and berries but will also take seed that has fallen onto the ground below bird tables and feeders.

Conservation status: **Red.** The decline of the Song Thrush began in the 1970's, dropping by 50% over 38 years. They were once more common than Blackbirds. Changes in farming practices, land drainage, woodland management and the use of slug-pellets (resulting in fewer snails) are all suggested as contributors to the poor survival rate of newly fledged birds.

In 2015 **Garden BirdWatch data** show that Song Thrushes were recorded in around 16% of Welsh gardens between April and June.

Make Your Garden Count!

If you enjoy watching the birds and wildlife in your garden why not take part in BTO Garden BirdWatch – the largest year-round survey of garden birds in the world? Please contact me for a free enquiry pack or to book a talk (Swansea and surrounding areas).

Happy Garden Bird Watching! Amanda Skull,
Garden BirdWatch Ambassador
07952 758293 (evenings & weekends only)

gbw@hafi.co.uk www.bto.org/gbw

Follow me on Twitter @amanda_skull



Song Thrush: Russ Myners