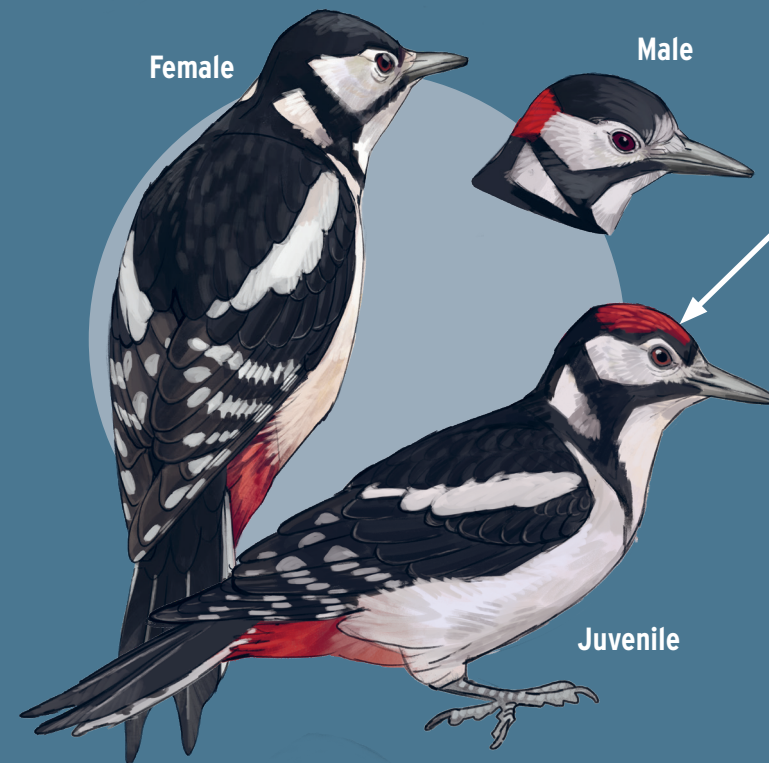


# WOODPECKERS

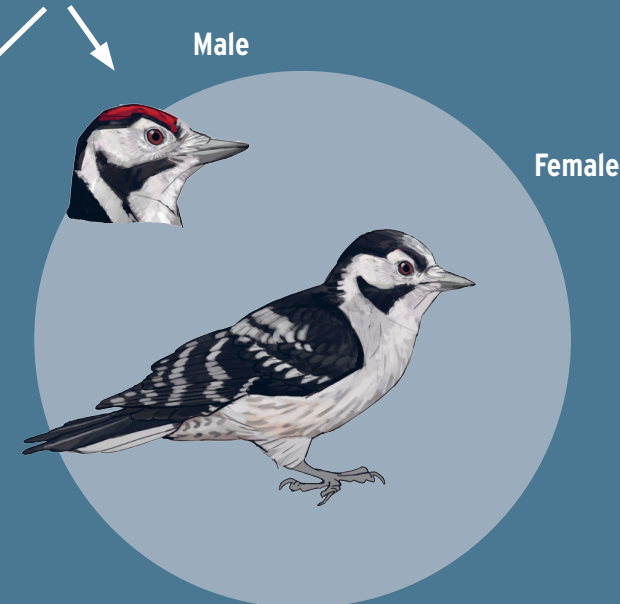
**F**our woodpeckers occur in the UK: Great Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker and Wryneck. Although they tend to have quite specialised diets, with Green Woodpecker and Wryneck being particularly fond of ants, Great and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker will take advantage of bird feeders. Woodpeckers may also be attracted to gardens with standing dead wood, as they search for nest sites.

## GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

One of two black and white woodpeckers occurring in the UK, Great Spotted Woodpecker can be separated from the similar Lesser Spotted Woodpecker by the two large white oval-shaped wing patches, a vivid red vent, clearly demarcated white belly and unstreaked flanks. Males have a red patch at the back of the nape, a feature that is absent in females. Juveniles have a completely red crown, which can lead to confusion with male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. In a typical year, there are two peaks in Great Spotted Woodpecker activity in gardens. The first is in June, as young birds near fledging, when around 29% of gardens report Great Spotted Woodpeckers, and the second is December, when they are most likely to be making regular visits to garden feeders to supplement their diet.



**CAUTION:** Juvenile Great Spotted Woodpeckers are sometimes mistaken for male Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers; given the latter's rarity, it is always worth trying to get a photo of any potential Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

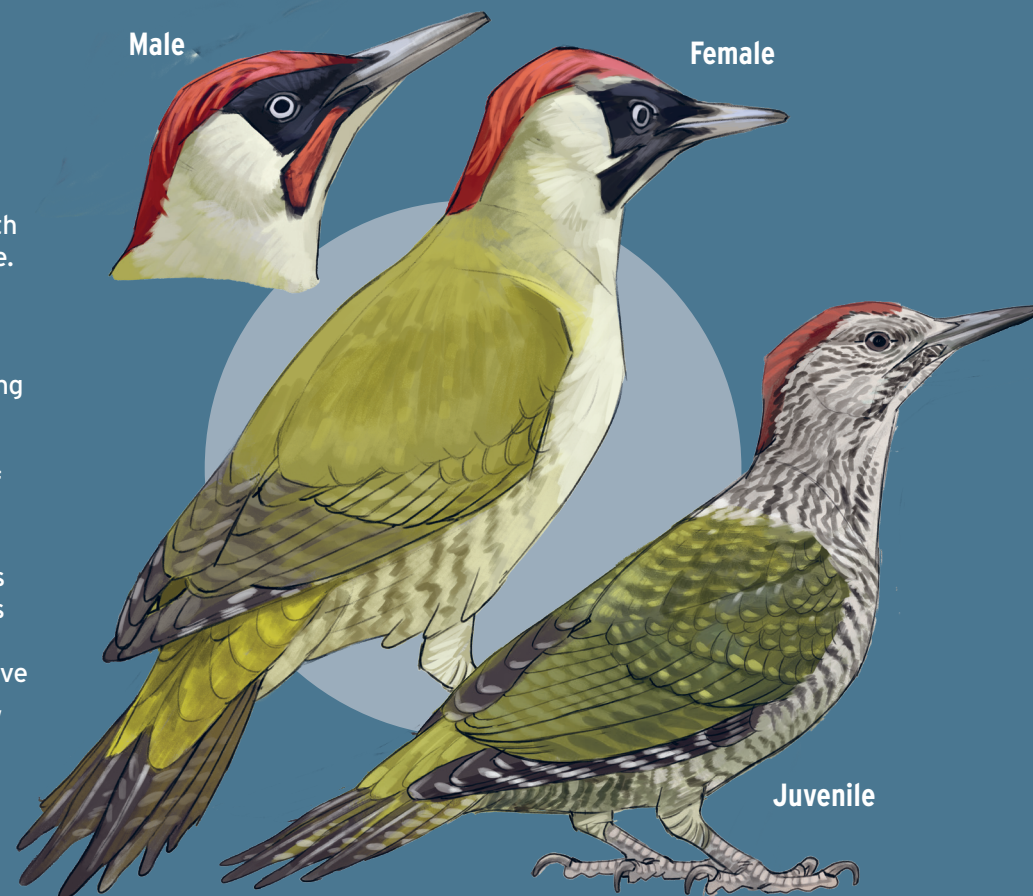


## LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, our other black and white woodpecker, lacks red on the vent, and has conspicuous white bars across the back and wings. The flanks are usually weakly streaked. Males have a striking red crown patch with black sides, whilst females have an entirely black crown. Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers are also **extremely small**, around the size of a sparrow and weighing about the same as an AA battery! Sadly, their dramatic population decline means that only a tiny handful of gardens can now expect an occasional visit by a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

## GREEN WOODPECKER

Green Woodpecker is a mossy-green bird, with a red cap and black markings around the face. The lower back is a brighter yellowish-green, the feature that is most likely to catch your eye if you disturb one and see it flying away, with its characteristic 'bounding' or undulating flight. The sexes look similar, though males have a red centre to the black moustache stripe, the line starting close to the corner of their beak. Juveniles are similar in colour to the adults but with extensive pale spotting on the upperparts and dark spots and stripes below. In recent years, around 4% of gardens have reported Green Woodpecker during the summer months. These gardens will often have ant-rich lawns and be near mature woodland, both essential for this species to breed successfully.



## WRYNECK

Wryneck is a scarce passage migrant to the UK, with just over 70 records from Garden BirdWatch gardens since the survey began. When they do visit gardens, which is usually from late August to mid October or more rarely, in late April and May, they are often seen looking for ants on the ground. Wryneck plumage is heavily patterned, and exceptionally well-camouflaged against tree bark. A dark brown line runs through the eye and down the neck sides, with another dark line running from the centre of the crown onto the middle of the back. The rest of the back is mottled brown and grey. The underparts are pale with dark barring and the long, grey and brown tail is finely barred, too.



Not to scale

Illustrations by Kirsty Yeomans / crowartist.co.uk