



Liz Cutting / BTO

New insights into Chaffinch feeding behaviour

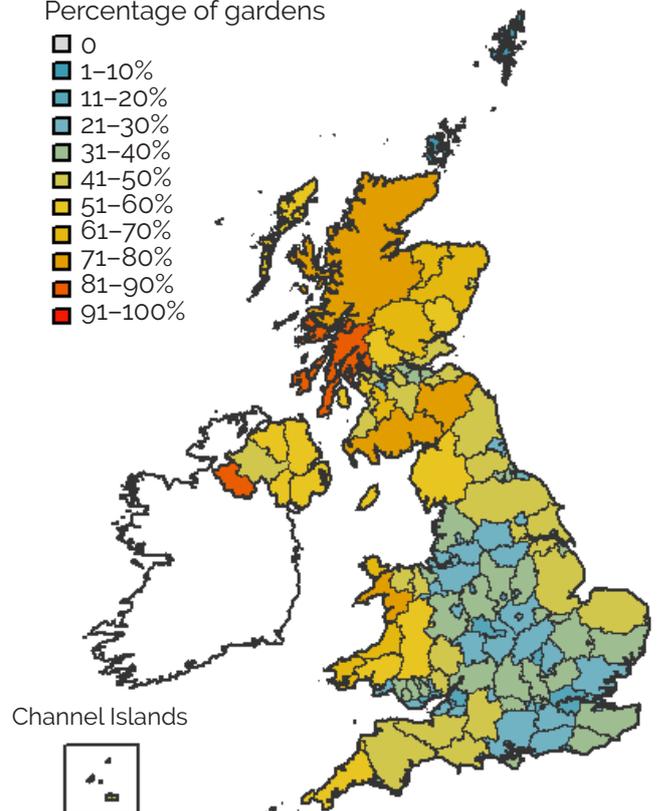
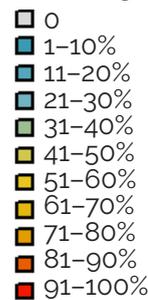
Chaffinches are familiar garden birds, and are common across the UK, but Gardenwatch has revealed big differences in their use of garden feeders across the country.

In parts of Scotland over 90% of gardens reported Chaffinches taking food from feeders during springtime, but in central and southern England only 20-30% of gardens were seeing these birds at feeders, despite the fact that Chaffinches, and garden bird feeders, are still very common in those areas.

Chaffinches mainly feed on seeds and caterpillars during spring, but they do have one of the widest diets of all our finches. We know that birds use garden feeders to supplement their natural diet, so this result is likely to indicate that Chaffinches are finding all the food they need outside gardens in central England, but less so in other parts of the UK.

Chaffinch feeder use

Percentage of gardens



For other maps visit www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results

Chaffinch facts

- Feeder use: 34% of gardens.
- Natural food use: 18% of gardens.
- Shelter use: 23% of gardens.
- Water use: 12% of gardens.
- Breeding activity: 8% of gardens.
- Nest use: 2% of gardens.

Maps by Kate Plummer, BTO

Gardenwatch was the UK's biggest ever garden wildlife audit, running during Springwatch in May 2019. The complete set of maps can be found at: www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results

What you can do to help

Chaffinches, like all finches, are predominately seed-eaters, and are well adapted to arable farmland. In gardens they are particularly attracted to mixed seeds and sunflower hearts, and while they will feed from hanging tube feeders, their preferred feeding habit is on the ground or on flat bird tables.

They are normally seen singly or in pairs during the breeding season, with larger flocks coming to garden bird feeders during the winter. These winter flocks often include immigrants from elsewhere in Europe.

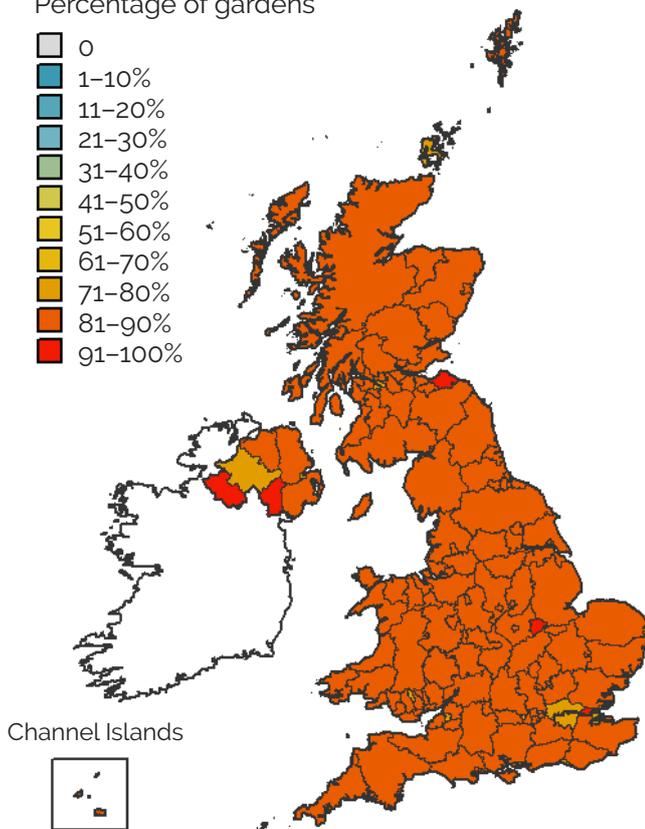


Tom Streeter / BTO

Bird feeding in gardens

Percentage of gardens

- 0
- 1-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- 51-60%
- 61-70%
- 71-80%
- 81-90%
- 91-100%



Channel Islands



Chaffinches are susceptible to a number of diseases: in particular, they are often seen with growths on the legs and feet, caused by an infection that can be transmitted between individuals. They are also vulnerable to finch trichomonosis, the disease that has caused a significant decline in the Greenfinch population over the last decade.

To minimise disease spread, follow good practice guidelines when feeding garden birds, including regularly cleaning your feeders and stopping feeding if you see sick or dead birds.

For more information on how to help the wildlife in your garden, please visit: bit.ly/bto-wildlife-gardening

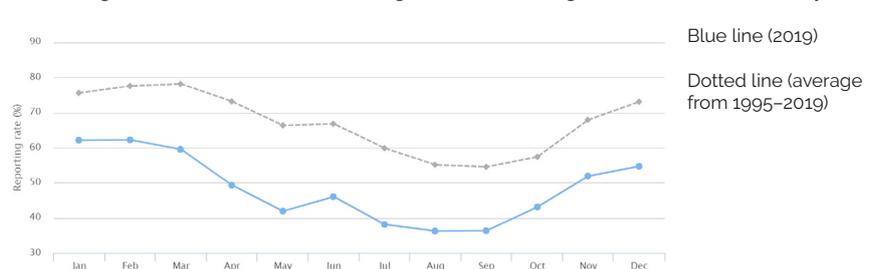
Help monitor Chaffinches

RECORD THE WILDLIFE IN YOUR GARDEN
FOR BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH www.bto.org/gbw



You can record the wildlife visiting your garden through the BTO's Garden BirdWatch. Keeping simple lists of the birds and other animals that visit your garden over a week will help with national research into the importance of gardens for wildlife.

Percentage of BTO Garden BirdWatch gardens recording Chaffinches across the year.



Source:GBW

Find out more about Gardenwatch and what we discovered: www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results