



Liz Cutting / BTO

## Secretive Robins make most use of gardens in central and southern England

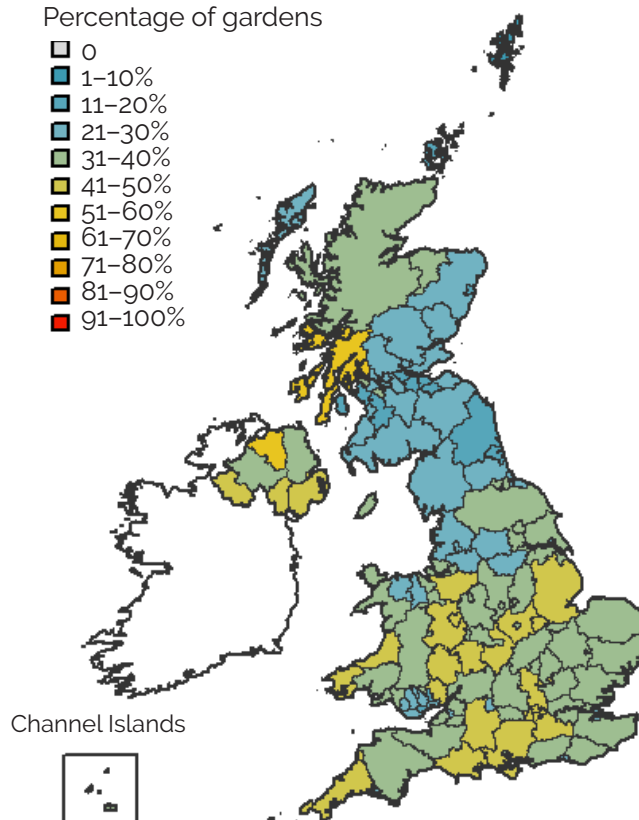
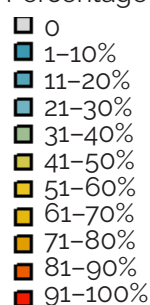
**Robins are one of our boldest and friendliest garden birds, always quick to investigate new opportunities.**

Their habit of nesting in cavities means they sometimes choose man-made nest sites, such as flower pots in sheds, post boxes and old boots. This endearing habit may make it seem as if their nests are always easy to see, but in fact when nesting in more natural locations their nests can be very hard to see, and their behaviour very secretive, so it's likely that many people might not be aware they have a Robin nest in their garden.

Robins were recorded feeding and sheltering in around 70% of Gardenwatch gardens, but were only recorded nesting in 29% of gardens. Gardens in central and southern England, and Wales were most often used by Robins, reflecting the areas of the country where they are most abundant. Robins are less likely to be seen in gardens in northern England and in Scotland.

### Robins nest activity in gardens

Percentage of gardens



For other maps visit [www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results](http://www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results)

### Robin facts

- Feeder use: 68% of gardens.
- Natural food use: 65% of gardens.
- Shelter use: 68% of gardens.
- Water use: 44% of gardens.
- Breeding activity: 35% of gardens.
- Nest use: 29% of gardens.

Maps by Kate Plummer, BTO

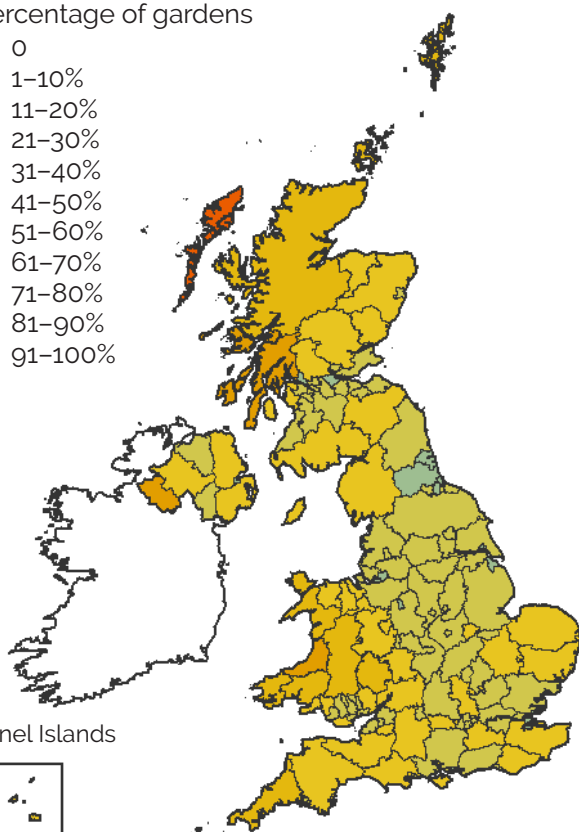
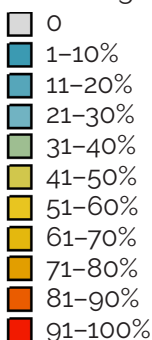
Gardenwatch was the UK's biggest ever garden wildlife audit, running during Springwatch in May 2019. The complete set of maps can be found at: [www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results](http://www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results)

# What you can do to help

Robins will eat a wide variety of foods. Their preferred natural prey items are small beetles and other insects, as well as soil invertebrates such as worms. They are active hunters, using their good eyesight to watch for movement, and generally prefer to forage for themselves rather than taking food from bird feeders. To provide a natural food supply to Robins, as well as other birds that eat ground-dwelling insects and soil invertebrates, simply leave a patch of your garden wild and undisturbed, with good ground cover.

## Wild areas in gardens

Percentage of gardens



Channel Islands



Tommy Holden / BTO

Natural Robin nests are in enclosed spaces, often on or near the ground, such as among tree roots, under logs or in thick, tangled vegetation. In gardens Robins will take to open-fronted nest boxes, but these are most likely to be used if they are sheltered, mimicking a well-hidden natural site.

Thick climbers such as Ivy grown along walls or fences provide good cover for open-fronted Robin nest boxes.

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

## Help monitor Robins

RECORD THE WILDLIFE IN YOUR GARDEN

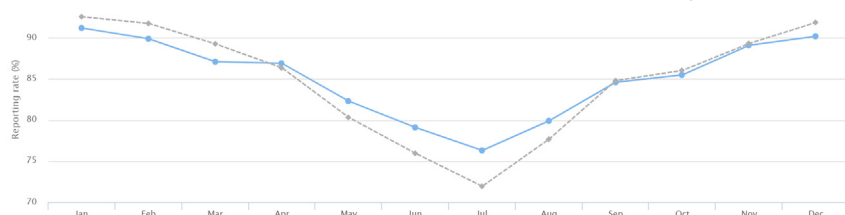
FOR BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH [www.bto.org/gbw](https://www.bto.org/gbw)

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 Robins across the year.

Blue line (2019)  
Dotted line (average from 1995–2019)



Source:GBW

Find out more about Gardenwatch and what we discovered: [www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results](https://www.bto.org/gardenwatch-results)