



Bird Watch October



Welcome to this month's Bird Watch. I'm one of two Ambassadors for the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Garden BirdWatch Scheme in South Wales.

Subject of the Month: National Bird Vote

Do you think Britain should have a national bird? David Lindo (AKA the Urban Birder) thinks so. You have until the end of this month to choose the six birds (from a shortlist of 60) that you think should go through to the final vote. For more information, and to cast your vote, visit www.votenationalbird.com. Would any of the following garden birds get your vote? Whilst the vote is not being organised by the BTO, the data used below has been collected by their Garden BirdWatch survey.

Blue Tit A common garden bird that is recorded by over 90% of Garden BirdWatchers.

Carrion Crow A territorial species meaning gardens are most likely to be visited by a local pair and their young.



Chaffinch Lower than average numbers visited gardens last autumn, probably due to a poor breeding season and a bumper seed crop outside of gardens.

Great Spotted Woodpecker Young birds are brought to feeding stations in the summer. 2013 was a good beechmast year resulting in a lower-than-normal autumn reporting rate in gardens.

Greenfinch Since the 2006 outbreak of the disease *Trichomonosis*, weekly counts no longer show much seasonal variation.

Pied Wagtail Usually only seen in 10% of gardens, the reporting rate doubled during the cold spell of January 2013.

Song Thrush Since 1967 the populations have fallen by 57%, a trend that's reflected in the garden reporting rate reducing year on year. This is a cold weather visitor to gardens.



Starling More birds visit gardens in May and June when adults have young to feed. Unfortunately this is a species in decline.

Swallow A summer visitor that peaks in gardens in August before migrating back to Africa.

Wren One of our most widespread birds, numbers took a knock during the long 2012/13 winter.



Make Your Garden Count!

Do you enjoy watching birds and other creatures in your garden? Do you want to help track their fortunes? Then why not join BTO Garden BirdWatch! 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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(Carrion Crow: Maurice Burrows, Chaffinch & Pied Wagtail: Derek Moore, Wren: Howard Grant)