







Relax...

...sit back, and welcome to the Big Garden Birdwatch.

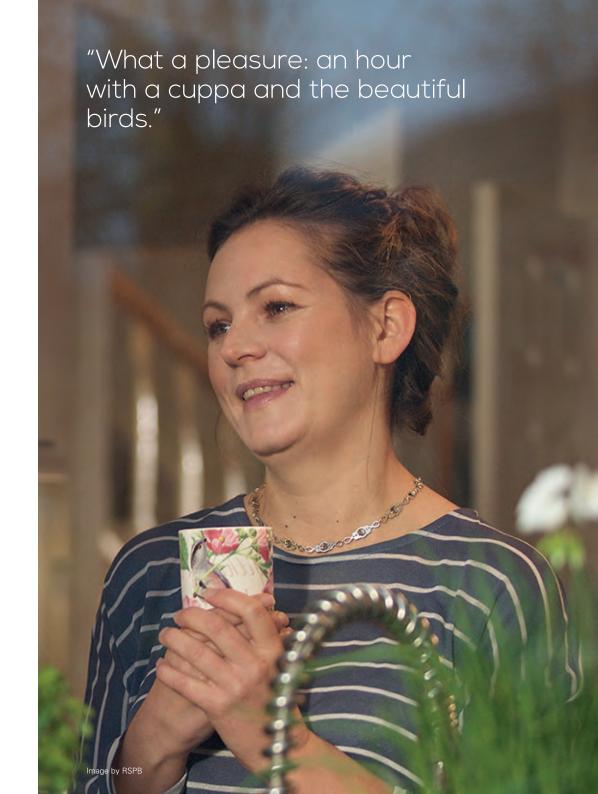
What is it?

It's an hour to yourself, simply watching the birds in your garden or local park, then telling us what you see. Since the Big Garden Birdwatch began almost 40 years ago, hundreds of thousands of people like you have taken part. This gives us an astonishing amount of insight into how our wildlife is faring.

Why do it?

It's a relaxing and interesting way to spend an hour, and it will help you to get closer to the birds and other wildlife near you.

By counting the wildlife that you see, you're giving us valuable information. We can then see what's thriving, and what's under threat – and then we can find out why.





How?

Here's what you need to do to take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch on 27, 28 or 29 January 2018.

Choose a time of day that's convenient for you. You'll probably see more birds if you do it early in the morning, but any time of day you can do it is useful for us. The event takes place over three days: Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Make yourself comfortable and watch the birds for an hour.

Record the highest number of each bird species that you see at any one time. Then answer the other questions about other wildlife species that visit your garden during the year.

Don't worry if you don't see anything over the hour, as it's still really useful information for us.

Good luck with your Birdwatch!

Let us know what you see.
You can use the survey form in this pack, or go online at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch
Remember to join in the conversation on social media: #BigGardenBirdwatch



Attract

You'll see more birds if they know your garden as a feeding spot.

Here's how to turn your garden into a Michelin-starred restaurant for birds. Different birds like different kinds of foods, from shop-bought fat balls to kitchen scraps.

From the kitchen

Try putting out grated cheese, cake, cooked potato, fruit, pastry, dried porridge oats or sultanas. Avoid dried fruit if you have a dog, as it can be poisonous. Check out your recipe card included in this pack for details of how to make a simple bird cake.

Birds and other wildlife also need water to drink and bathe in, so make sure there's always a fresh supply.

You can find more activities to help you get ready for your Birdwatch at **rspb.org.uk/birdwatch**

From the RSPB shop

Sunflower hearts are full of energy for blue tits, great tits, greenfinches, goldfinches, blackbirds and house sparrows. Put them in a feeder, on a table, or simply sprinkle them on the ground.

Suet balls are great for blackbirds, house sparrows, starlings and robins in winter, when birds need high-fat foods to survive the cold.

Vist **rspbshop.co.uk** for other bird foods and ways to give nature a home.



What the Birdwatch has told us

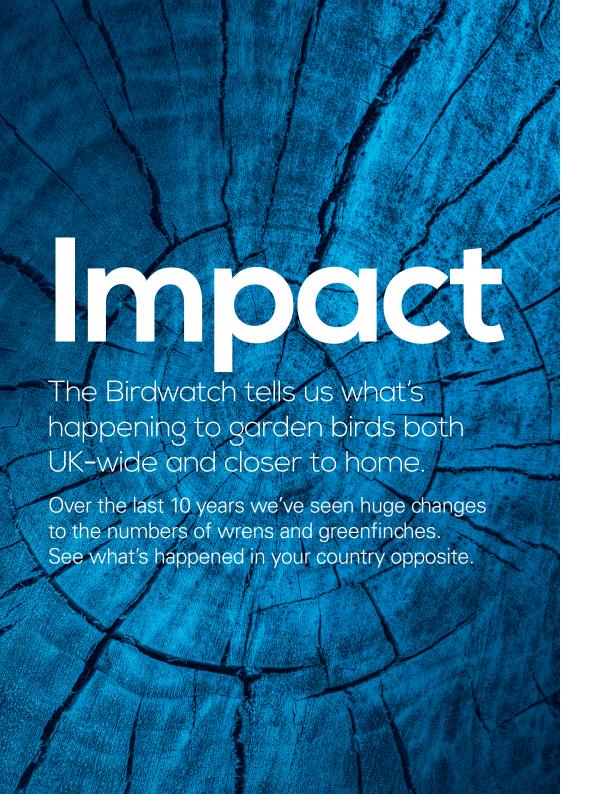
You're joining a huge team: the Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest wildlife survey and around half a million people take part each year. Because of the Birdwatch we know that. in our gardens since 1979, starlings have declined by 79% and song thrushes have declined by around 70%.

Since 2014 we've also been asking you about wildlife other than birds that visits your garden. Through this, we now know that only 25% of people see hedgehogs in their garden at least once a month.

All this information adds up to create a detailed snapshot of how our wildlife is faring around the UK.



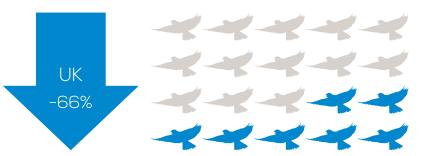




Large decrease 2007-2017

Greenfinch





England: -66%

N. Ireland: **-77%**

Scotland: -64%

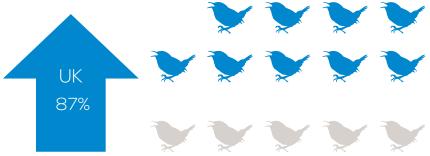
Wales: **-67%**

Large increase 2007-2017









England: **91%**

N. Ireland: **55%**

Scotland: 46%

Wales: **92%**

January

It's time for the Big Garden Birdwatch 2018! Put out nutritious, high-fat foods, such as cheese, bird seeds, whole nuts, bird cakes and sunflower hearts, to help birds survive. Don't forget water too!

| Monl | New Year's Day | Wed 17 |
|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| Tue 2 | Bank Holiday (Scotland) | Thu 18 |
| Wed 3 | | Fri 19 |
| Thu 4 | | Sat 20 |
| Fri 5 | | Sun 21 |
| Sat 6 | | Mon 22 |
| Sun 7 | | Tue 23 |
| Mon 8 | | Wed 24 |
| Tue 9 | | Thu 25 |
| Wed 10 | | Fri 26 |
| Thu ll | | Sat 27 |
| Fri 12 | | 1-1 |
| Sat 13 | | |
| Sun 14 | | |
| Mon 15 | | |
| Tue 16 | | G |



Sun 28 Mon 29

Tue 30

Wed 31

February

If your hedges need trimming, do it after birds have eaten the berries, but before the nesting season.

| Thu 1 | Sat 17 | National Nestbox Week |
|--------|------------|-----------------------|
| Fri 2 | Sun 18 | National Nestbox Week |
| Sat 3 | Mon 19 | National Nestbox Week |
| Sun 4 | Tue 20 | National Nestbox Week |
| Mon 5 | Wed 21 | National Nestbox Week |
| Tue 6 | Thu 22 | |
| Wed 7 | Fri 23 | |
| Thu 8 | Sat 24 | |
| Fri 9 | Sun 25 | |
| Sat 10 | Mon 26 | |
| Sun 11 | Tue 27 | |
| Mon 12 | Wed 28 | |
| Tue 13 | | |
| Wed 14 | | |

14th

Thu 15

Fri 16

Give your garden birds some love: put up a nestbox.

National Nestbox Week

National Nestbox Week



March

March is a good planting month. Try planting evergreen plants such as holly or ivy.

| Thu 1 | St. David's Day | Sat 17 | St. Patrick's Day |
|--------|------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Fri 2 | | Sun 18 | St. Patrick's Day Holiday (NI) |
| Sat 3 | | Mon 19 | |
| Sun 4 | | Tue 20 | |
| Mon 5 | | Wed 21 | |
| Tue 6 | | Thu 22 | |
| Wed 7 | | Fri 23 | |
| Thu 8 | | Sat 24 | |
| Fri 9 | | Sun 25 | |
| Sat 10 | | Mon 26 | |
| Sun 11 | Mothering Sunday | Tue 27 | |
| Mon 12 | | Wed 28 | 3 |
| Tue 13 | | Thu 29 | |
| Wed 14 | | Fri 30 | Good Friday |
| Thu 15 | | Sat 31 | |
| Fri 16 | | | |

3rd

Keep an eye on ponds for the first frogspawn of the year.



You might be tempted to tidy up after winter, but leaving areas undisturbed is great for wildlife.

| Sun1 | Easter Sunday | Tue 17 | |
|--------|---------------|--------|-----------------|
| Mon 2 | Easter Monday | Wed 18 | |
| Tue 3 | | Thu 19 | |
| Wed 4 | | Fri 20 | |
| Thu 5 | | Sat 21 | |
| Fri 6 | | Sun 22 | |
| Sat 7 | | Mon 23 | St George's Day |
| Sun 8 | | Tue 24 | |
| Mon 9 | | Wed 25 | |
| Tue 10 | | Thu 26 | |
| Wed 11 | | Fri 27 | |
| Thu 12 | | Sat 28 | |
| Fri 13 | | Sun 29 | |
| Sat 14 | | | |
| Sun 15 | | 1 | |
| Mon 16 | | 10 | |

1st

It's Easter - but if there are any real Easter eggs in your garden, make sure you don't disturb them



May

Bring the countryside into your garden by planting some wildflower seeds.

| Tue 1 | Thu 17 |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Wed 2 | Fri 18 |
| Thu 3 | Sat 19 |
| Fri 4 | Sun 20 |
| Sat 5 | Mon 21 |
| Sun 6 | Tue 22 |
| Mon 7 Bank Holiday | Wed 23 |
| Tue 8 | Thu 24 |
| Wed 9 | Fri 25 |
| Thu 10 | Sat 26 |
| Fri 11 | Sun 27 |
| Sat 12 | Mon 28 Bank Holiday |
| Sun 13 | Tue 29 |
| Mon 14 | Wed 30 |
| Tue 15 | Thu 31 |
| Wed 16 | |

2nd

Keep a look out for swifts returning from Africa.

June

Leave an area of your lawn uncut until late summer to create your own mini-meadow. Wildlife will love you for it, and it'll give you a bit of a rest, too.

| Fril | Sun 17 | Father's Day |
|--------|--------|--------------|
| Sat 2 | Mon 18 | |
| Sun 3 | Tue 19 | |
| Mon 4 | Wed 20 | |
| Tue 5 | Thu 21 | |
| Wed 6 | Fri 22 | |
| Thu 7 | Sat 23 | |
| Fri 8 | Sun 24 | |
| Sat 9 | Mon 25 | |
| Sun 10 | Tue 26 | |
| Mon 11 | Wed 27 | |
| Tue 12 | Thu 28 | |
| Wed 13 | Fri 29 | |
| Thu 14 | Sat 30 | |
| Fri 15 | | |
| | | |

21st

Sat 16

It's the longest day. Whilst you're enjoying the long evening, blackbirds and sparrows need to raise another brood.



July

Remember to keep your bird bath topped up during the warm summer months. It can be a lifeline for thirsty birds when natural supplies have dried up.

| Sun 1 | Tue 17 |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Mon 2 | Wed 18 |
| Tue 3 | Thu 19 |
| Wed 4 | Fri 20 |
| Thu 5 | Sat 21 |
| Fri 6 | Sun 22 |
| Sat 7 | Mon 23 |
| Sun 8 | Tue 24 |
| Mon 9 | Wed 25 |
| Tue 10 | Thu 26 |
| Wed ll | Fri 27 |
| Thu 12 Bank Holiday (NI) | Sat 28 |
| Fri 13 | Sun 29 |
| Sat 14 | Mon 30 |
| Sun 15 | Tue 31 |

Mon 16

20th

Dragonflies are at their peak. Keep an eye out next time you're near a lake or pond.

Dragonfly by Fotolia

August

Now's the time to dead-head roses and other perennial plants to encourage them to keep flowering.

| Wedl | | Fri 17 | |
|--------|-------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Thu 2 | | Sat 18 | |
| Fri 3 | | Sun 19 | |
| Sat 4 | | Mon 20 | |
| Sun 5 | | Tue 21 | |
| Mon 6 | Bank Holiday (Scotland) | Wed 22 | |
| Tue 7 | | Thu 23 | |
| Wed 8 | | Fri 24 | |
| Thu 9 | | Sat 25 | |
| Fri 10 | | Sun 26 | |
| Sat 11 | | Mon 27 | Bank Holiday (England, NI) |
| Sun 12 | | Tue 28 | |
| Mon 13 | | Wed 29 | |
| Tue 14 | | Thu 30 | |
| Wed 15 | | Fri 31 | / |
| Thu 16 | | | / / . |

27th

Look out for moths on the evening of the Bank Holiday.

Tiger moth by Tom Marshall (rspb-images.com)

September

Create a water feature. Even if you don't have space for a full-blown pond, a washing up bowl will provide a great place for wildlife to drink and bathe.

| Sat 1 | Mon 17 |
|--------|--------|
| Sun 2 | Tue 18 |
| Mon 3 | Wed 19 |
| Tue 4 | Thu 20 |
| Wed 5 | Fri 21 |
| Thu 6 | Sat 22 |
| Fri 7 | Sun 23 |
| Sat 8 | Mon 24 |
| Sun 9 | Tue 25 |
| Mon 10 | Wed 26 |
| Tue 11 | Thu 27 |
| Wed 12 | Fri 28 |
| Thu 13 | Sat 29 |
| Fri 14 | Sun 30 |
| Sat 15 | |

5th

Sun 16

Over the next couple of weeks, watch out for swallows and house martins congregating before they migrate to Africa.

Swallow by Fotolia

October

Make your own compost and leaf piles. Not only will it be good for the garden, but the compost heap itself is great for all sorts of wildlife.

| Mon 1 | Wed 17 | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Tue 2 | Thu 18 | | |
| Wed 3 | Fri 19 | | |
| Thu 4 | Sat 20 RSPB AGM & Members Day | | |
| Fri 5 | Sun 21 | | |
| Sat 6 | Mon 22 | | |
| Sun 7 | Tue 23 | | |
| Mon 8 | Wed 24 | | |
| Tue 9 | Thu 25 | | |
| Wed 10 | Fri 26 | | |
| Thu ll | Sat 27 | | |
| Fri 12 | Sun 28 | | |
| Sat 13 | Mon 29 | | |
| Sun 14 | Tue 30 | | |
| Mon 15 | Wed 31 Hallowe'en | | |
| Tue 16 | | | |

31st

Boo! Remember that spiders are nature's pest controllers, so don't scare them away.

Spider by Shutterstock

November

This is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. It'll give them plenty of time to get established before winter.

| Thu 1 | | Sat 17 | |
|--------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Fri 2 | | Sun 18 | |
| Sat 3 | | Mon 19 | |
| Sun 4 | | Tue 20 | |
| Mon 5 | Bonfire Night | Wed 21 | |
| Tue 6 | | Thu 22 | |
| Wed 7 | | Fri 23 | |
| Thu 8 | | Sat 24 | |
| Fri 9 | | Sun 25 | |
| Sat 10 | | Mon 26 | |
| Sun 11 | Remembrance Sunday | Tue 27 | |
| Mon 12 | | Wed 28 | |
| Tue 13 | | Thu 29 | |
| Wed 14 | | Fri 30 | St Andrew's Day |
| | | | |

Fri 16

5th

Thu 15

Remember, remember... to check your bonfire for hedgehogs before you light it, in case they're hibernating in there.



The bare branches of winter make it easier to see the birds that are active. Listen out for robins, who may be starting to claim their territory.

| Sat 1 | Mon 17 | |
|--------|--------|----------------|
| Sun 2 | Tue 18 | |
| Mon 3 | Wed 19 | |
| Tue 4 | Thu 20 | |
| Wed 5 | Fri 21 | |
| Thu 6 | Sat 22 | |
| Fri 7 | Sun 23 | |
| Sat 8 | Mon 24 | Christmas Eve |
| Sun 9 | Tue 25 | Christmas Day |
| Mon 10 | Wed 26 | Boxing Day |
| Tue 11 | Thu 27 | |
| Wed 12 | Fri 28 | |
| Thu 13 | Sat 29 | |
| Fri 14 | Sun 30 | |
| Sat 15 | Mon 31 | New Year's Eve |
| Sun 16 | | |

25th

Give your garden birds a tasty Christmas treat.



Leaf by Judy Lawrance / Alamy



Which birds can you see?

You can use this handy counting sheet during the Big Garden Birdwatch. Please count the most you see of each species at any one time, not the total seen over the hour. Then submit your results at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch or fill in and send us the survey form from the pack - don't send this sheet!

Seen something else? Go to **rspb.org.uk/birdidentifier** to find out what it might be.



Great tit

Look for a black stripe down its yellow front. The males have a slightly thicker stripe than the females.

How many have you seen all at once?



Long-tailed tit

Tiny body; long tail. Known affectionately as "bumbarrels" in some parts of the country. Often in groups.

How many have you seen all at once?



Goldfinch

Look for the gold in its wings, but also the red on its head. More than one? A flock of goldfinches is called a charm.

How many have you seen all at once?





Robin

Unmistakable orange breast. Some visit from the Continent in winter. You can hear its song almost any time of year.

How many have you seen all at once?



Blue tit

Blue is not the only colour on this tit. Look out for yellow on its front, green on its back and white on its face too.

How many have you seen all at once?



Greenfinch

Bigger than goldfinches, greenfinches have a chunky beak to crack seeds. Look out for green/yellow in the wings.

How many have you seen all at once?





Woodpigeon

This large garden bird is mostly grey with a white patch on its neck. Often on the ground hoovering up fallen seed.

How many have you seen all at once?



This large bird will feed on scraps. Look closely and you might see purples and greens in its iridescent feathers.

How many have you seen all at once?







Starling

Look closely in winter and you'll see lots of different colours in this mostly black bird, including white spots.

How many have you seen all at once?

Chaffinch

Male chaffinches have a pinky-orange breast, while females are more brown. Both have distinctive white bars in their wings, which you can see well when they fly. They usually prefer feeding on the ground or a birdtable.

How many have you seen all at once?

UM UM UM UM









House sparrow

Although still at the number one spot in the 2016 Birdwatch, results show that house sparrows have declined by 58% since 1979. The male has a grey head, black bib and brown streaky back, while the female is more brown all over.

How many have you seen all at once?





Dunnock

Female

The dunnock is a small streaky brown and grey bird. It feeds on the ground, flicking its wings nervously as it goes.

How many have you seen all at once?



Smaller than a great tit, with a black head and white stripe down the middle at the back.

How many have you seen all at once?

Male



Collared dove

colonising the UK in the 1950s.

Look for its black neck collar. It came

11th in the 2016 Birdwatch, after only

How many have you seen all at once?



Don't forget to submit your results at **rspb.org.uk/birdwatch** or fill in the survey form from the pack and post it back to us!

Blackbird

Males are black and females brown, both with yellow beaks. Often feed on the ground on fruit, worms or insects.

How many have you seen all at once?



Great tit by Steve Round, blue tit by Tony Hamblin, woodpigeon by David Kjaer (all rspb-images. com), robin (Alamy Stock Photo), magpie, goldfinch and dunnock (all dreamstime.com), male chaffinch (thinkstock), female chaffinch, greenfinch, starling, female blackbird, male sparrow, female sparrow and collared dove (all shutterstock), long-tailed tit, male blackbird and coal tit (all 123f.com). The RSPB is a registered charity in England and Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.



For the birds

Bird cake

You will need:

- Yogurt pots
- String
- Scissors
- Suet or lard
- Mixing bowl
- RSPB bird seed
- Raisins
- Grated cheese
- 1. Using scissors, make a hole in the bottom of the yogurt pot.
- 2. Thread string through the hole and tie a knot on the inside. Leave enough string so that you can tie the pot to your tree or a bird table.
- 3. Allow the lard to warm to room temperature, cut it up into small pieces, and add to a bowl.
- 4. Add the other ingredients to the bowl, and mix them together with your fingertips.
- 5. Keep adding the seeds, raisins and cheese, and knead until it is all held together by the fat.
- 6. Fill the yogurt pot with the bird cake mixture, and put it in the fridge to set for an hour or two.
- 7. Hang your bird cakes from trees or your bird table. Watch out for greenfinches, tits, and even great spotted woodpeckers.



NB: Don't use raisins if you have a dog, as they are poisonous to them.





For you

Birdwatch bites

You will need:

- 100g/3.5oz butter
- 100g/3.5oz sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 apple (eg Golden Delicious), diced
- 50g/1.7oz grated coconut

- 50g/1.7oz sunflower seeds
- 50g/1.7oz raisins or dried cranberries
- 175g/6.25oz oats
- 140g/4.5oz brown flour
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1. Preheat oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5.
- 2. Grease and line a baking tray.
- 3. Cream together butter and sugar.
- 4. Add the egg and vanilla extract, and beat.
- 5. Stir in the coconut and sunflower seeds, and add the diced apple.
- 6. In a separate bowl, mix together oats, flour, baking powder and raisins.
- 7. Add to the butter mixture.
- 8. Form into 2.5cm (1 inch) spheres. The idea is that they look like bird cakes!
- 9. Bake in a preheated oven for 10–15 minutes, until lightly browned.
- 10. Cool on a wire rack.
- 11. Enjoy with a cup of tea or coffee during your Birdwatch, and feed any leftover sunflower seeds, apple and raisins to your birds.



Image by Shutterstock

Top tip!

This is the basic recipe, but if you're a star baker, feel free to add icing, glitter, or any other dried fruit or flavouring you choose.





Count the wildlife that's counting on you

27-29 January 2018

Order today at **rspbshop.co.uk/bgbw**Call **0345 034 7733****, or visit an RSPB shop.
To find your nearest shop, go to **rspb.org.uk/shop**

Special offer for all your Birdwatch extras

Find bird food, feeders and more at **rspbshop.co.uk/bgbw**

To order everything you need to take part, call **0345 034 7733**** for a full catalogue or visit one of our shops.



*Terms and conditions:

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** Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

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Greenfinch by Andrew Marshall (rspb-images.com). The RSPB is a registered charity in England and Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654. 356-0499-17-18. ITM05239. 409435.



that's counting on you Count the wildlife

- Watch the birds in your garden or local park for one hour.
 - Only count the birds that land in your garden or local park, not those flying over. ณ
- The same birds may land more than once. To avoid counting them twice, please submit the highest number you see of each bird species at any one time in the hour not the total number you count over the hour. ന
- Tell us what you've seen in your hour, even if you saw nothing it's still really useful information! Tell us about other wildlife that visits your garden or local park during the year too 4
 - Please complete and return this form to the Freepost address shown below, or enter your results at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch ம

| Telephone |
|-----------|
|-----------|

The results of this year's Birdwatch will be released in March and summarised on

If you let us know your email address (above) we will send the results straight to your inbox. Image by Genevieve Leaper (rspb-images.com).

The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654. 356-0736-16-17



Big Garden Birdwatch

Enjoy an hour in the company of nature during **27–29 January 2018** and be part of the world's largest wildlife survey.

Thank you for taking part - your results will help us work out how nature is doing right, across the UK

How often do you see other wildlife?

the box next to the animal. Please don't leave any boxes blank, so if you don't know, write "F". Thank you for helping us find out often. Please put the appropriate letter from the key (below) in You may not see the creatures below in your hour (especially hibernating), but we'd like to know if they have visited your garden or local park in the last year and, if so, roughly how hedgehogs, slow worms and grass snakes, which may be more about your local wildlife.

A = Daily, B = Weekly, C = Monthly, D = Less than monthly, = Never, F = Don't know ш

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | all parts of the UK. | rt? Adults Children | rden Birdwatch at home, Postcode (if different from opposite) | |
|--------|-----|------|-------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|----------|------|--------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------|------|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| Badger | Fox | Frog | Grass snake | Muntjac | Great crested newt | Grey squirrel | Hedgehog | Mole | Red squirrel | Roe deer | Slow worm | Stag beetle | Stoat | Toad | Some species do not appear in all parts of the UK. | How many people took part? | If you didn't do the Big Garden Birdwatch at home, where did you do it? Postcode (if different fro | |

rspb.org.uk/birdwatch using code BH30. The survey results will This is a short address, but rest assured it'll reach us.

BwJNAM0173 write Freepost RSPB BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH on the front. Please ensure only this wording appears on the return envelope. rather return your form by post, please put it in an envelope and If you'd like to change how you hear from us, it's easy to do. Just call us on 01767 693680 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm), visit rspb.org.uk/preferences, or write to Supporter Services, The RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL. be announced on 28 March and summarised on our website. Please let us know your results by 13 February 2018. If you'd Thank you! Tell us what you saw online at: