

Garden Birds

Whether you live in a village, town or city, you will have seen British garden birds in your garden, school grounds or local park. The UK is lucky enough to have many **native** garden birds. Let's find out about some of them...



Robin

With their bright red breast and face, robins are easy to spot, despite being only around 13cm long. You will often hear them singing into the evening with their high 'tic tic tic' song.



Robins can be seen in gardens throughout cities, towns and villages. They will nest almost anywhere, including inside old watering cans or sheds. They will make a cup-shaped nest mainly from moss in which they will lay 4-6 eggs (white with sandy or red freckles) between May and July.

Their usual diet includes:

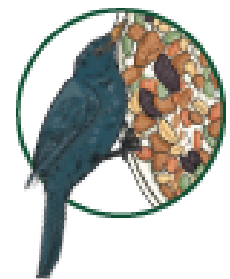
- insects and their larvae;
- spiders;
- worms;
- weeds;
- fruit;
- berries;
- seeds;
- nuts.

To encourage robins into your garden, you could provide them with **mealworms** on a bird table. Robins can become very tame and might even eat out of your hand!



Blackbird

Male blackbirds are usually jet-black with an orange beak, whereas females are dark brown with a brown beak. They are larger than robins, at around 25cm long. They can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song.



Blackbirds are found in a wide variety of habitats, including:

- woodland;
- towns;
- fields;
- gardens;
- cities;
- countryside.

Originally, blackbirds were woodland birds; they usually nest in bushes or trees, using grass, horsehair and mud to make their nests. Although they mostly eat insects, they can have a very varied diet and this is one of the reasons they manage to survive. Blackbirds are also able to catch worms if the grass is soft enough for them to dig with their beaks.



Wren

Size: 9-10cm long

Weight: 8-13g (the same as a £1 coin!)

Eggs: 5-8 eggs (white with red freckles)

Diet: Insects and spiders

Nests: Made from grass, moss and leaves and lined in feathers

Song: A loud "teck teck teck" call ending in a trill

Despite being so small, wrens are the loudest and most common of Britain's native birds. They have brown **plumage** and a short tail, which constantly flicks. Young wrens are almost identical to their parents except that they don't have pale eyebrows.



Threats to Garden Birds and How You Can Help

There are things that we use in our gardens which could harm garden birds, such as:

Netting – People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their vegetables, but birds can become tangled in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of natural material.

Outside lights – Outside lights can confuse birds causing them to collide with windows as they use the light to **navigate**. If you have outside lights, put them on a timer so they do not stay on at night.

Artificial Grass – **Artificial** turf destroys habitats for birds and the insects they eat so it is best to use natural grass wherever possible.



Did You Know...?

Many people think that the wren is Britain's smallest native bird. However, the goldcrest is smaller at just 9cm long and 6g in weight!



Did You Know...?

Although they are not always **resident** in the UK, nightingales are special summer visitors to parts of southern England. They are very secretive and hard to spot but their melodic song can be heard through the day and night. They are some of the loudest, fastest singers of the bird world!

Glossary

artificial: Something made by humans; not natural.

mealworms: The larva of the meal beetle; often used as food for birds.

native: Born in a particular place.

navigate: To find its way.

plumage: A bird's feathers.

resident: Living somewhere permanently.

trill: A quavering sound.



Questions

1. How many eggs will robins lay? Tick one.

- 4-6
- 5-8
- 9-10
- 13

2. Draw three lines to match each bird to their size.

robin

wren

blackbird

13cm long

25cm long

9-10cm long

3. What is the smallest native bird in the UK?

4. Fill in the missing words:

Nightingales are not always _____ in the UK but are special _____ visitors to parts of _____ England.

5. Find and copy a word from the Threats to Garden Birds and How You Can Help section which means the same as crash into.

6. Who do you think that the author has written the text for?

7. Explain how you could help British garden birds.

8. Which of the birds mentioned would you most like to see? Give at least two reasons.
