

Your garden birdwatch

A few weeks ago, the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) published its garden birdwatch annual review for 2019. This review ranks the most commonly seen birds in gardens nationwide and as we approach high summer, it might be fun for you to compare this list with the birds you see in your garden. There will obviously be regional variations, for example we are more likely to see blackcaps in the south-west than those living further north. And seasonal variations, try finding a swallow in the winter! But compare the usual culprits – and watch out for the unusual ones as well. The ranked list for 2019 is at the end of this newsletter.

Pushy juveniles in the garden

Further to the above, I am sure we can all recognise a speckly young robin who has not yet acquired its redbreast of fame. But can you recognise the immature goldfinch without its distinctive red face, or the immature bullfinch without its parent's dark cap? (Check out also the red cap on a young greater spotted woodpecker). With the breeding season reaching its peak, see if you can spot some of these young birds.

Bird health

With us all now washing our hands so frequently, it is timely to remember the importance of giving our bird feeders a regular clean as well. Wash empty feeders with warm soapy water and if possible, move feeding sites from time to time, especially in dry weather. Viruses affect birds as well as people, greenfinch populations for example have been badly hit in recent years by a disease called trichomonosis, known to be spread by poor hygiene.

And finally – watch out, thief about

Wanted in connection with thefts of garden produce (namely, my strawberries!)

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Garden Birdwatch annual review for 2019.

Birds listed in the order that they are most widely seen, starting at top.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Percentage of gardens recording a sighting</i>			
Blue tit	>	>	>	over 80%
Woodpigeon				as above
Blackbird				
Robin				
Great Tit	>	>	>	60% to 80%
Dunnock				as above
House Sparrow				
Goldfinch				
Magpie	>	>	>	40% to 60%
Collared Dove				as above
Chaffinch				
Coal Tit				
Starling				
Jackdaw	>	>	>	20% to 40%
Greenfinch				as above
Carrion Crow				
Wren				
Long-Tailed Tit				
Greater Spotted Woodpecker				
Feral Pigeon	>	>	>	less than 20%
Nuthatch				as above
Song Thrush				
Bullfinch				
Sparrowhawk				
Jay				
Rook				
Siskin				
Blackcap				
Stock Dove				
Pied Wagtail				
Tree Sparrow				
Goldcrest				
Herring Gull				
Swallow				
Swift				
Tawny Owl				
Chiffchaff				
Green Woodpecker				