

Garden Birds

Why do Birds Matter?

- They help plant life by scattering seeds. This means that seeds get to travel to different places and grow in other places.
- They control insect growth. Many birds eat insects. Without birds eating them, there would be a dangerously high number of insects.
- Birds, like magpies and crows, eat dead animals. This gets rid of the rotting animals which could cause diseases.



Numbers of Common Garden Birds

There has been a big drop in the number of starlings. The reason could be that farming has made it more difficult for them to find their favourite food – the crane fly larvae.

The number of house sparrows has also dropped. This could be because of cats, or air pollution due to more cars being used. Fortunately, last year, there was an increase in house sparrows reported through an RSPB survey.

There has also been an increase in less well-known birds, like fieldfares. One reason for seeing more fieldfares in gardens seems to be the cold weather that has made them leave the countryside and look for food in gardens.



RSPB

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - a charity that protects British birds.

Migration

Some birds migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer.

- Swifts and swallows migrate to Africa.
- They can fly 200 miles every day.
- Many die from starvation, exhaustion and storms.



At the beginning of 2016, there were more sightings of long-tailed tits and goldcrests. A warmer winter meant more of these tiny birds survived.

Resident British Birds



Robins:

- have a bright red breast;
- are very aggressive and will defend their territory;
- sing all year round;
- can be seen in British gardens all year round.

Magpies:

- have a loud, chattering cackle;
- can be easily seen with their black and white feathers;
- are important insect controllers;
- hunt for leftover food and dead animals.



Questions

1. Why is it a good thing that birds help scatter seeds?

2. What would happen if birds did not eat insects?

3. Name one bird that eats dead animals.

4. What is a starling's favourite food?

5. Give one reason why there are fewer house sparrows around.

6. What do the RSPB do?

7. Why are fieldfares having to leave the countryside?

8. Why are there more long-tailed tits and goldcrest birds around?

9. How far can migrating birds fly on one day?

10. Which word has been used that means robins can get angry with other birds?

11. Write two facts about magpies.

