

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

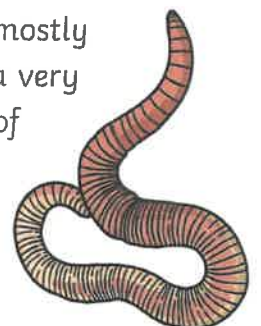
Male blackbirds are usually jet-black with an orange beak, whereas females are dark brown with a brown beak. They are larger than robins, at around 25cm long. They can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song.



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.



"Robin Stood On Garden Fork Handle" by Anthony Morris

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.

Garden Birds

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Robin

Latin Name:
Erithacus rubecula

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, in a cup-shaped nest made mainly from moss. 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;
- seeds;
- fruit;
- berries;
- nuts.



Robins may even become very tame and feed out of your hands!

Blackbird

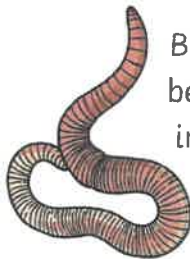
Latin Name:
Turdus merula



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, but can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song.

Blackbirds are found in a wide variety of habitats, including woodland, fields, gardens, towns, cities and countryside. Originally, blackbirds were woodland birds; still usually found nesting in bushes, shrubs or trees. They use grass, horsehair and fine roots held together with mud to form their nests, which are usually lined with grass, and lay their bluish green eggs in them.

Blackbirds mostly eat insects but have been known to have a very varied diet, including nuts, berries, cheese, fruit, newts and shrews – one of the reasons they thrive in the wild. Blackbirds are also able to catch worms if the grass is soft enough for them to dig with their beaks.





Wren

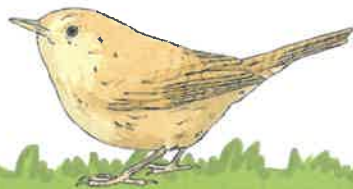
Latin Name:
Troglodytes troglodytes

Despite their miniscule size, at only 9-10cm long and weighing 8-13g (the same weight as a £1 coin), wrens are not actually Britain's smallest native bird – a title held by the goldcrest, at just 9cm long and 6g in weight. However, wrens are Britain's most common native bird. To spot an adult wren, look out for brown **plumage** and a short tail which constantly flicks.

Wrens are good at hiding in amongst trees and bushes, where they build their nests from grass, moss and leaves and line them with feathers.



Within these nests, adult wrens will lay 5-8 white eggs with brown speckles. When born, young wrens are almost identical to their parents except that they don't have prominent pale eyebrows. Wrens have a varied diet but mainly choose to feed on insects and spiders.



Did You Know...?

Although it is so small, the wren has the loudest song of our native birds; they can be heard making a loud "teck teck teck" call ending in a **trill**.



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...?

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.

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 long are blackbirds? Tick one.

- ☐ 9cm
☐ 9-10cm
☐ 13cm
☐ 25cm

2. Draw **three** lines to match each bird to the description of their egg.

robin

wren

blackbird

bluish green eggs, spotted with brown

white with sandy or red freckles

white with brown speckles

3. Name **two** habitats that blackbirds can be found in.

- _____
- _____

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their _____, but birds can become _____ in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of _____.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows that nightingales do not live permanently within the UK.

6. Summarise the information about nightingales in 30 words or fewer.

7. Why do you think that robins can become so tame that they feed out of people's hands?

8. Why do you think that nightingales are described as a 'special summer visitor'?

9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.

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Robin

Latin Name:
Erithacus rubecula

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

Seen throughout gardens in cities, towns and villages, robins will nest almost anywhere, including in old watering cans or sheds. Between May and July, robins will lay 4-6 eggs in a cup-shaped nest made mainly from moss. The eggs are predominantly white with sandy or red freckles and adult robins may lay a clutch of eggs up to three times per year.

The usual diet of robins consists mainly of insects and their larvae, spiders, worms, weeds, seeds, fruit, berries, nuts and oats. In order to encourage robins into your garden, provide mealworms on a bird table. Robins have the potential to become very tame and may even feed out of your hand!



Blackbird

Latin Name:
Turdus merula



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, and can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song or their 'tchook tchook tchook' alarm call.

Blackbirds are found in a wide variety of habitats, including woodland, fields, gardens, towns, cities and countryside. Originally, blackbirds were woodland birds; still usually found nesting in bushes, shrubs or trees. They use grass, horsehair and fine roots held together with mud to form their nests, which are usually lined with grass. They will lay 3-6 bluish green eggs, spotted with brown, in each clutch and this can occur up to three times per year.

Blackbirds mostly eat insects but have been known to have a very varied diet, including nuts, berries, cheese, fruit, newts and shrews – one of the reasons they thrive in the wild.

Blackbirds are also able to catch worms if the grass is soft enough for them to dig with their beaks.



Wren

Latin Name:
Troglodytes troglodytes

Despite their miniscule size, at only 9-10cm long and 8-13g in weight, wrens are surprisingly not Britain's smallest native bird – a title held by the goldcrest, at just 9cm long and 6g in weight. Although tiny in stature, the wren has the loudest song (relative to their size) of all UK native birds and they can be heard making a loud 'teck teck teck' call ending in a trill (quavering note).

Wrens are good at hiding in amongst trees and bushes, where they build their nests from grass, moss and leaves and line them with soft feathers. To spot an adult wren, look out for brown plumage and a short tail which constantly flicks. The young (juveniles) – born in clutches of 5-8 eggs once or twice per year – are almost identical to their parents except they don't have prominent pale eyebrows. Wrens have a varied diet but mainly choose insects and spiders, which they find along the ground with their beak.

Threats to Garden Birds and How You Can Help

There are things that we use in our gardens which could harm garden birds but you could make a difference by making small changes, 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, rather than nylon.

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, ensure they are 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.

Weed Killers – Weed killers can poison birds or destroy the insects that they feed on. Try to use natural methods to control the insects within your garden, such as by encouraging insect-eating birds or other wild animals, such as hedgehogs, to visit.



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!

Questions

1. What is the Latin name of the wren? Tick one.

- ☐ Luscinia megarhynchos
- ☐ Troglodytes troglodytes
- ☐ Turdus merula
- ☐ Erithacus rubecula

2. Draw **three** lines to match each bird to its song.

robin

wren

blackbird

tchook tchook tchook

tic tic tic

teck teck teck

3. What does **trill** mean?

4. Find and copy **two** things that robins will eat.

- ---
- ---

5. What is the problem with using nets in a garden?

6. Why do you think wrens are so good at hiding?

7. Summarise the information from the third paragraph in 40 words or fewer.

8. Which of the threats do you think is the most problematic? What could you do to help the problem?

9. Why do you think that robins are Britain's favourite bird? Give at least two reasons.

10. Can you think of any other threats to garden birds? What could you do to help the problem?
