



For immediate use

Pull up an armchair...

... and make Scotland's gardens count! This is the seasonal message being broadcast by BTO Scotland's Garden BirdWatch Team, who are looking to increase the number of armchair birdwatchers across the country.

Scotland's gardens support important populations of several bird species and, additionally, provide feeding opportunities for others at particular times of the year. However, the importance of our gardens for birds and other wildlife is something that is often overlooked by those working in conservation.

Mike Toms, Head of Garden Ecology at the BTO, commented *"It is essential for us to find out how and when birds make use of gardens, so that we can build up a more complete picture of why their populations change over time. Since you cannot go around and peer into peoples' gardens to find out what birds they have, we rely on armchair birdwatchers (the garden owners) to tell us what is going on. The information they collect for us is used to underpin conservation policy within Scotland."*

Mandy Cook at BTO Scotland said *"Through the weekly BTO Garden BirdWatch survey we have just under a 1,000 armchair birdwatchers in Scotland telling us which birds are using their gardens. However, we really need to double this number so that we can get a more complete picture of how garden use varies regionally across Scotland. For example, we want to know how gardens in Glasgow differ from those in Inverness or in Fort William."*

The Garden BirdWatch Team has produced a free enquiry pack, complete with guides to feeding and looking after the hygiene needs of garden birds.

For your free Enquiry pack, please call the BTO on 01786-466560, email gbw@bto.org or write to GBW, BTO Scotland, Cottrell Building, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA.

Garden Ecology Team

Making your garden count!

More >>

Notes for editors

1. ABOUT THE ORGANISATION:



BTO: The BTO is the UK's leading bird research organisation. Over 40,000 birdwatchers contribute to the BTO's surveys. They collect information that forms the basis of conservation action in the UK. The BTO maintains a staff of 100 at its offices in Norfolk and Stirling, who analyse and publicise the results of project work. The BTO's investigations are funded by government, industry and conservation organisations. www.bto.org

2. THE BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH:

The BTO Garden BirdWatch is the only nationwide survey of garden birds to run weekly throughout the year, providing important information on how birds use gardens, and how this use changes over time. Currently, some 15,000 people take part in the project, with just under 1,000 participating in Scotland. The project is funded by participants' contributions and is the largest year-round survey of garden birds in the world. More more information see www.bto.org/gbw.

3. THE TOP-TEN GARDEN BIRDS IN SCOTLAND DURING EARLY WINTER (OCT-DEC):

1. Blue Tit (92% of gardens).
2. Robin (91% of gardens).
3. Coal Tit (88% of gardens).
4. Blackbird (88% of gardens).
5. Chaffinch (86% of gardens).
6. Dunnock (81% of gardens).
7. Great Tit (80% of gardens).
8. House Sparrow (65% of gardens).
9. Greenfinch (63% of gardens).
10. Woodpigeon (54% of gardens).

Contact information

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The BTO has a dedicated ISDN line for radio interviews, contact press@bto.org for details

Images of BIRDS are available upon request from images@bto.org, please quote '2009-12-46'