

# SCHOOLS' GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

Join up your class or school to take part in Ireland's largest bird survey!



Mistle Thrush

Richard T. Mills

## Why don't you take part in the Schools' Garden Bird Survey 2023/2024?\*

You can, simply by setting up a feeding station for birds at your school. Choose a place in the school grounds that is clearly visible from a window in the school building. Try and pick a safe space for birds where feeders can be hung from a branch of a tree and where birds have a safe area to approach and to retreat to. Then watch, and record what you see. Easy!

\* The survey is designed for primary schools. You may also continue to take part in the original Irish Garden Bird Survey, designed for private gardens (full details on the BirdWatch Ireland website [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)).

### School Garden details

Tell us some information about your school

The school grounds, are they... (tick 'yes' or 'no'.)

Urban (in a town or city centre)?  yes  no

Suburban (on the outskirts of a town or city)?  yes  no

Rural (in or beside open country or farm land)?  yes  no

### What size are they?

Half the size of a tennis court, or smaller  yes  no

Approx. tennis court size  yes  no

Larger than a tennis court  yes  no

An acre or larger  yes  no

### Food available for birds...

Are berry bushes present?  yes  no

### Do you provide...

Peanuts in feeders?  yes  no

Seeds in feeders?  yes  no

Scraps?  yes  no

Fruit?  yes  no

Fat / bird cake?  yes  no



Free poster!

### Food for Birds: Some dos and don'ts

- Peanuts, sunflower seed and mixed seed in mesh and plastic feeders are ideal for many small birds.
- Over-ripe or slightly spoilt fruit is ideal for Blackcaps and thrushes, either left on the ground or speared onto a branch.
- Some crumbs and stale cake will be mopped up by sparrows and larger birds. A bird cake recipe is available from BirdWatch Ireland. Check out our web pages at [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)
- Don't put out too much at a time, as you may encourage some less welcome furry visitors. Loose food shouldn't be left out overnight.
- Try to provide some clean water. An upturned bin lid will do, as will any shallow container.
- Make sure the birds have a regular food supply. Fill the feeders on Fridays and top up during the following week as they empty.
- Try to continue feeding and watching birds right through the winter season, especially when it is cold.

**Resources** BirdWatch Ireland can provide your class with our new Garden Bird Poster, showing the top 30 species in gardens and schools. There are lots of useful tips too. Check out our website for downloadable Bird Profiles, [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie). Get your teacher to e-mail [info@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:info@birdwatchireland.ie) for a free copy of the Garden Bird Poster.

We can also provide your class with a super **free gift** if your school joins BirdWatch Ireland. School membership includes 4 issues of *Wings*, 2 issues of *Bird Detectives*, specially for 7 to 12 year-old children, and a Welcome Pack that includes a copy of the best-selling book, *Ireland's Garden Birds*.

Join online at [www.bit.ly/BWljoin](http://www.bit.ly/BWljoin) or telephone BirdWatch Ireland on 01-2819878.



Redwing

Richard T. Mills

Fill out online, or return form to: BirdWatch Ireland, Unit 20, Block D, Bullford Business Campus, Kilcoole, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 RW83.

## What did you see?

Students should jot down any counts during the week in a jotter or notebook. Some birds you will see every day, some less frequently, or maybe just once in a flock.

At the end of the school week, go through the list with your teacher and take the largest single count for each bird species and enter it on the recording sheet below. If you have no count for a species or no counts at all, leave the boxes or column blank!

**Example** On Monday you count 3 Blue Tits on a peanut feeder and notice 1 waiting in a nearby bush, total = 4 birds. On Wednesday, just 2 on the feeder = 2 birds.

On Friday, 1 was seen all day which was joined by 2 first thing in the morning = 3 birds. So, record 4 Blue Tits on the form, the highest count of the week. If you see a bird that is not on the list below, just add it to the end of the form.



Wren

Kevin Murphy

### Top Ten garden birds

How many of our 10 most common garden birds did you see?

- |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Robin     | 6. Great Tit     |
| 2. Blackbird | 7. Coal Tit      |
| 3. Blue Tit  | 8. Goldfinch     |
| 4. Chaffinch | 9. House Sparrow |
| 5. Magpie    | 10. Wren         |

## Schools' Garden Bird recording form

Participating school name

Address

Class

Teacher

E-mail address

| Week beginning  | 27<br>Nov | 4<br>Dec | 11<br>Dec | 18<br>Dec | 25<br>Dec | 1<br>Jan | 8<br>Jan | 15<br>Jan | 22<br>Jan | 29<br>Jan | 5<br>Feb | 12<br>Feb | 19<br>Feb |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Sparrowhawk     |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Feral Pigeon    |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Woodpigeon      |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Collared Dove   |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Grey Wagtail    |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Pied Wagtail    |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Wren            |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Dunnock         |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Robin           |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Blackbird       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Fieldfare       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Song Thrush     |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Redwing         |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Mistle Thrush   |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Goldcrest       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Long-tailed Tit |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Coal Tit        |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Blue Tit        |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Great Tit       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Magpie          |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Jackdaw         |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Rook            |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Hooded Crow     |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Starling        |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| House Sparrow   |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Chaffinch       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Greenfinch      |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Goldfinch       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Siskin          |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Bullfinch       |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Redpoll         |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Other species   |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
| Other species   |           |          |           |           |           |          |          |           |           |           |          |           |           |

School  
Holidays!