

Tuesday Club Nature Notes

with Jan Flamank



BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH 2021

Many of us have been lucky enough to enjoy watching birds in our gardens and local green spaces, especially in these tough, but necessary, times of lockdown.

The RSPB does a fantastic job each year of encouraging us all to be 'social scientists', reporting which birds we have nearby. January is the time for the annual Big Garden Birdwatch, and it only needs an hour of our time. It is a really useful way of recording and understanding patterns in bird behaviour, and changes in the number of those small local birds we can easily take for granted in our gardens. It is the largest wildlife survey in the world and very easy to be part of. Simply join by going to [rspb.org.uk](https://www.rspb.org.uk), where you will find all the information you need. They will also post out a paper copy of the bird I.D. and information sheets if that is better for you. The number is 01767 693690.

So, between January 29th and 31st 2021, settle down with a cuppa or a coffee, specs on, or with binoculars if you have any, and record which birds you can see in your garden, over one hour. What a simple, delightful thing to do.

We know to keep feeding our garden birds through winter with high energy food such as sunflower seeds - which are actually tiny nuts - fat balls and mealworms, and ensure they have supplies of fresh water too. Fill the feeders little and often, keep them clean, and I also leave a few apples on the lawn and put out grated cheese and dried fruit on the table feeder.

Alongside this reminder, some really useful smallish trees to attract birds to our gardens in winter are: Native Rowan, best with red or pink berries, Holly, Ivy, Crab Apple, Hawthorn, Hazel, all providing food, shelter and beauty.

Enjoy all the birds who visit, whether natives or visitors like waxwings, and nearby European neighbours who swell our numbers of blackbirds, robins, etc.