



Robin

Erithacus rubecula

One of our best-loved birds, the red-breasted Robin, is perhaps the most recognisable species of British wildlife. The Robin's popularity is no mystery as it is a common garden bird that can be very tame; its behaviour is perky and highly entertaining, and it has a beautiful, varied and melodious song.

Actually a native of deciduous woodland in the rest of Europe, the profusion of trees, hedges and lawns so typical of parks and gardens in Britain suit it perfectly. Very territorial, the Robin defends its own 'patch' aggressively. Rivals puff their red breasts up and hurl bursts of song at each other, and serious fights can occur. Robins keep a territory throughout the year as



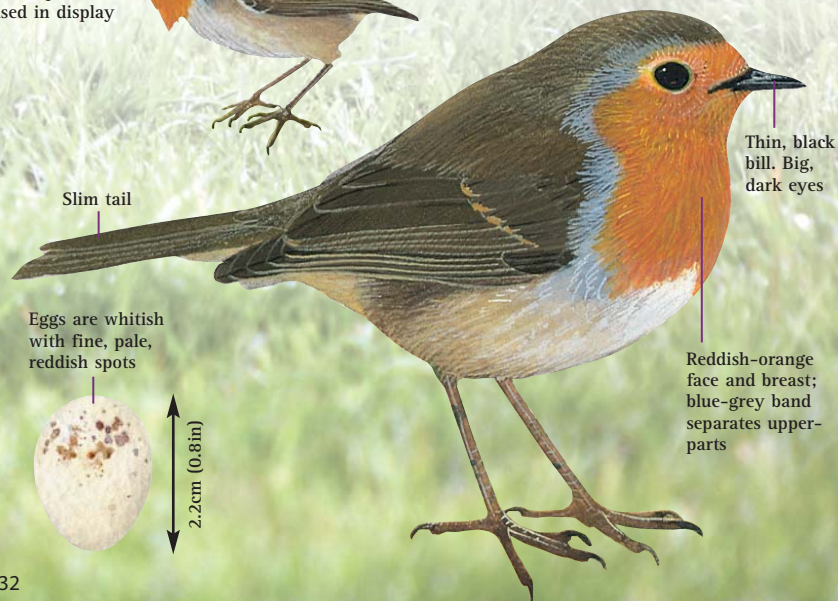
Warm brown back with thin, pale wingbar



Juvenile has creamy spots on head, dark mottles on gingerly chest



Both sexes aggressive; breast patch used in display



Slim tail

Thin, black bill. Big, dark eyes

Reddish-orange face and breast; blue-grey band separates upper-parts

Eggs are whitish with fine, pale, reddish spots

2.2cm (0.8in)



In winter and spring the male's vibrant song serves to attract a mate and to advertise territory ownership.

pairs need an exclusive place to breed and provide a reliable source of food.

A Robin's favourite hunting technique is to watch an area of ground from a low perch, then drop down quickly to catch tasty morsels, before returning to the same perch. Tamer British Robins have learned to stay near a gardener turning over soil or raking leaves, so they can seize any insects that have been exposed.

DISTRIBUTION

Movements: Found throughout Britain and Ireland, including offshore islands. Mostly resident, but some British Robins migrate to mainland Europe in winter and are replaced by birds from further north.



Population: Very common, with an estimated 4.5 million breeding pairs in Britain and 2 million in Ireland.

Birder's Tip



Robins are one of the few birds to sing during autumn and winter; this song tends to be softer, with a more mournful tone.

KEY FACTS



Length: 14cm (5.5in)

Wingspan: 20-22cm (8-8.75in)

Weight: 14-25g (0.5-0.9oz)

Food & feeding: Mainly insects and larvae; worms and other invertebrates; also berries and seeds in autumn and winter; kitchen scraps from bird tables

Voice: One of the only birds to sing all year; alarm call when predators nearby is loud, repeated *tic* or *tseeee*, also used for territorial defence; melodious warbling song with sudden changes in tempo; autumn and spring songs noticeably different; in autumn, more subdued and melancholy, while spring song is energetic and powerful

Nest: Neat cup of moss, grass and leaves, resting on pad of dead leaves; usually well-hidden inside hole in base of tree or hedge; often found in open-fronted nest boxes

Eggs: 4-6

Incubation: 13-14 days, by female

Fledging: Usually 11-14 days

Broods: 2, sometimes 3

Breeding season: March-July

Maturity: 1 year

When present: All year