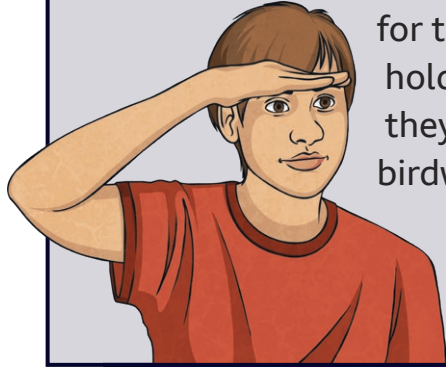




# Wild Birds

## The Big Schools' Birdwatch



The RSPB is a charity which helps the **conservation** of birds; it is otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Every year, they hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see. After the information is gathered, it is reviewed to see whether there are any changes in bird populations.

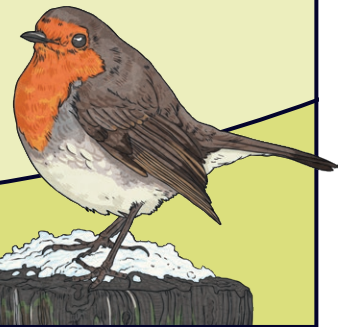
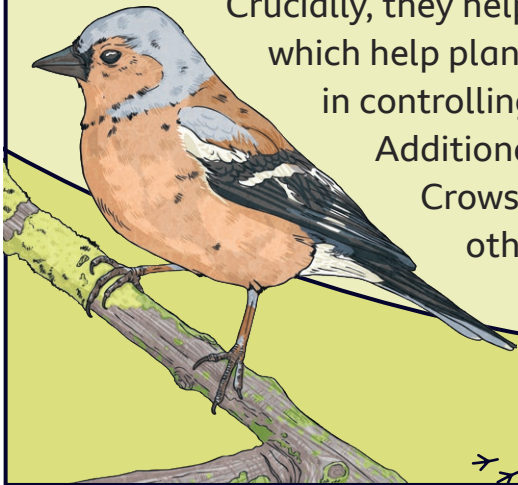


## Why are birds important?

Birds help the environment in a number of important ways.

Crucially, they help to develop plant life as they scatter seeds which help plants grow in different places. They are important in controlling the levels of insects as many birds eat them.

Additionally, some birds, such as Magpies and Crows, consume dead animals that could otherwise cause diseases.



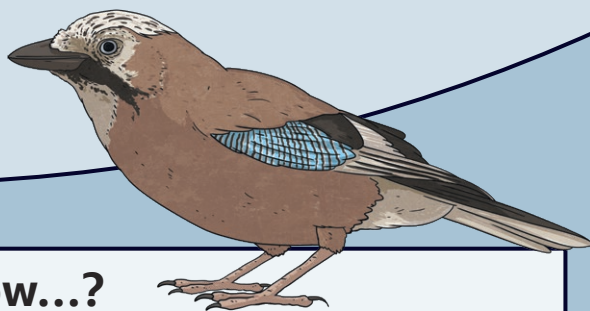
## Numbers of common garden birds

Throughout UK gardens and green spaces, a wide range of birds can be seen, though changes in population numbers have been witnessed in recent years.



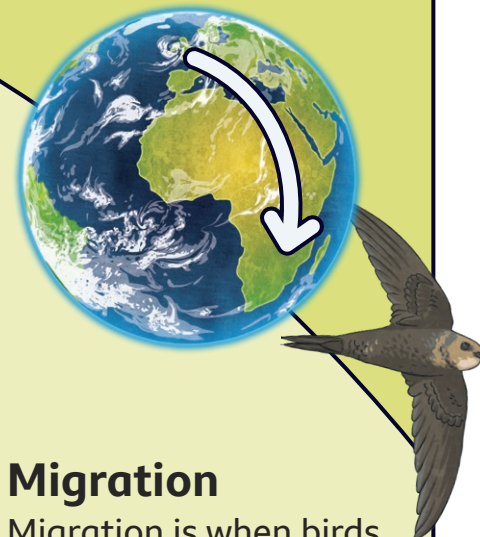
According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird. Despite this, their numbers have decreased significantly since the 1970s. In addition, the number of Starlings has greatly declined. Although the exact reason is unknown, it is thought that their food supply may have been affected by farming practices or dry summers, with creatures such as earthworms and crane fly larvae being less available.

Recently, there has been an increase in sightings of Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to help feed them during the winter, a technique referred to as 'caching'.



### Did You Know...?

Amazingly, one Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!



### Migration

Migration is when birds travel from one place to another. Some species migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer. Swifts migrate to Africa, sometimes flying 200 miles in a day. Many die from starvation, exhaustion and storms.

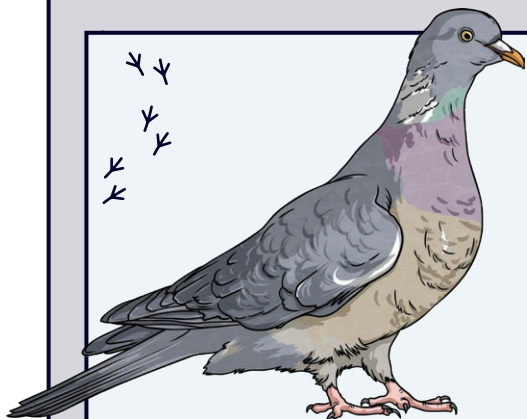
### Different species of birds

Different species of birds have specific features. Beaks of different types of birds have **evolved** differently to support them in different ways, such as feeding themselves and their young, building nests and grooming themselves.





Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes. Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.



Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often **scavenge** for scraps of food. Their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which mainly consists of seeds, nuts and berries. Woodpigeons are mostly grey with a white patch on their neck and white patches on their wings; they make a recognisable cooing sound.

With their distinctive heart-shaped face, Barn Owls are easily identified. As nocturnal creatures, they hunt during the night and scour open areas for small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. Their sharp talons and curved beak allow them to catch and tear apart the flesh of their prey.



## Glossary

**conservation:** The protection of wildlife or nature.

**evolved:** Developed over time.

**scavenge:** To search through unwanted things or waste for something to eat.



# Questions



1. Which family of birds does the Jay belong to? Tick one.

- ☐ Sparrow  
☐ Crow  
☐ Owl  
☐ Eagle

2. Draw **four** lines and match each sub-heading with the corresponding sentence.

**Why are birds important?**

According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird.

**Numbers of common garden birds**

Swifts migrate to Africa, sometimes flying 200 miles in a day.

**Migration**

Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.

**Different species of birds**

Birds help the environment in a number of important ways.

3. Fill in the missing word.

Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often

\_\_\_\_\_ for scraps of food.

4. Name two creatures that Barn Owls eat.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Look at the section *Why are birds important?***

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'eat'.

---

**6. Why do you think some birds may suffer from starvation when they are migrating?**

---

---

---

**7. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn...**

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'hoarding' to describe the Jays' behaviour?

---

---

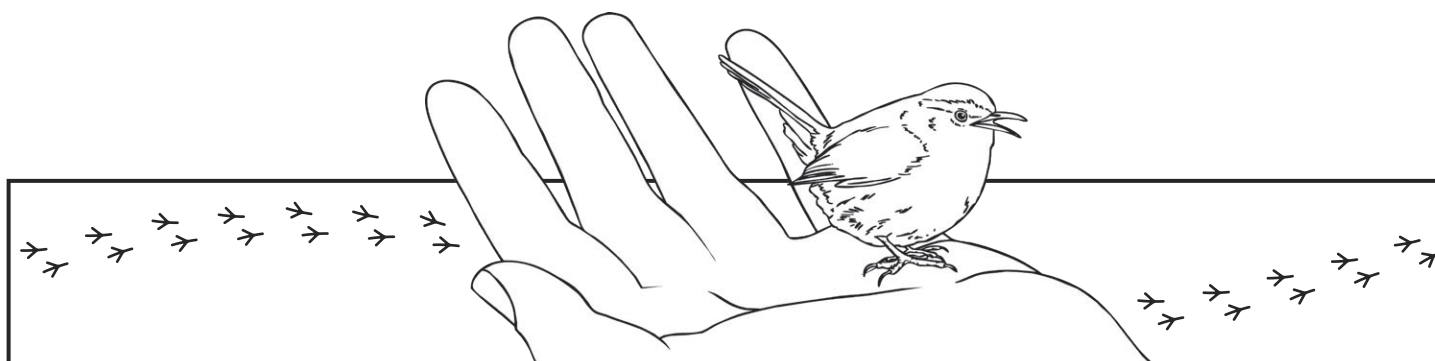
---

**8. Summarise in 30 words or fewer what you have learnt about the Big Schools' Birdwatch.**

---

---

---

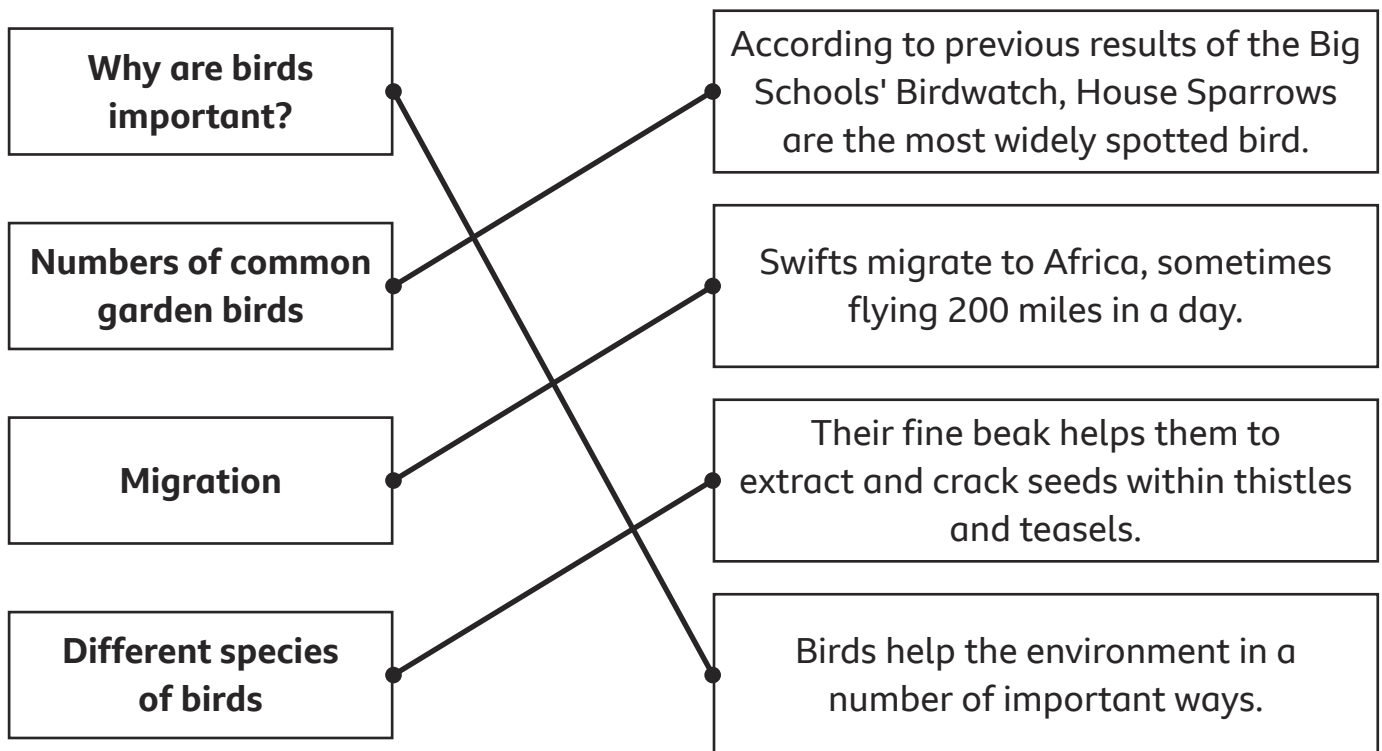


# Answers

1. Which family of birds does the Jay belong to? Tick one.

- ☐ Sparrow  
☒ **Crow**  
☐ Owl  
☐ Eagle

2. Draw **four** lines and match each sub-heading with the corresponding sentence.



3. Fill in the missing word.

Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often **scavenge** for scraps of food.

4. Name two creatures that Barn Owls eat.

**Accept any two of the following: voles; rats; mice.**

5. Look at the section **Why are birds important?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'eat'.

**consume**

6. Why do you think some birds may suffer from starvation when they are migrating?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that some birds may suffer from starvation when they are migrating because they may find it harder to find food to eat when they are travelling in unfamiliar places.**

7. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn...

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'hoarding' to describe the Jays' behaviour?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author means that the Jays hide and store away a large number of acorns by the use of the word 'hoarding'.**

8. Summarise in 30 words or fewer what you have learnt about the Big Schools' Birdwatch.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The Big Schools' Birdwatch is held every year by the RSPB to encourage people to take part in birdwatching. It helps them monitor any changes in bird populations.**

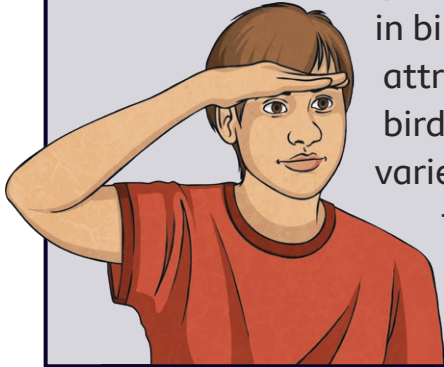


# Wild Birds

## The Big Schools' Birdwatch



The RSPB (otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is a charity which helps the **conservation** of birds. Every year, they hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see. In order to attract a greater number of birds, the RSPB recommends adding birdbaths or feeders to gardens; bird feeders can be filled with a variety of foods, such as fat balls and seeds but it is recommended to serve dried or live mealworms out of a flat dish. After the information is gathered, it is analysed to see whether there are any changes in bird populations.



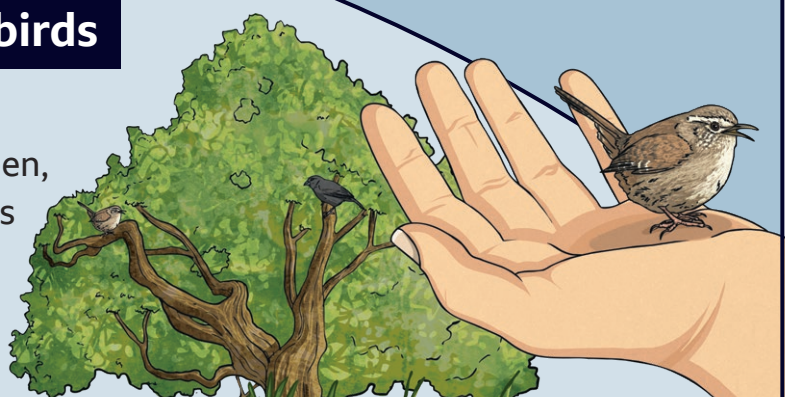
## Why are birds important?

Birds benefit the environment in a number of significant ways. Crucially, they help to develop plant life as they disperse seeds which help plants grow in different places. Regarded as natural pest controllers, birds are vital in regulating the levels of insects. As these creatures form the primary source of food for many birds, this effectively reduces the amount of damage to crops due to insect infestation. Additionally, some birds, such as Magpies and Crows, consume dead animals that could otherwise cause diseases.



## Numbers of common garden birds

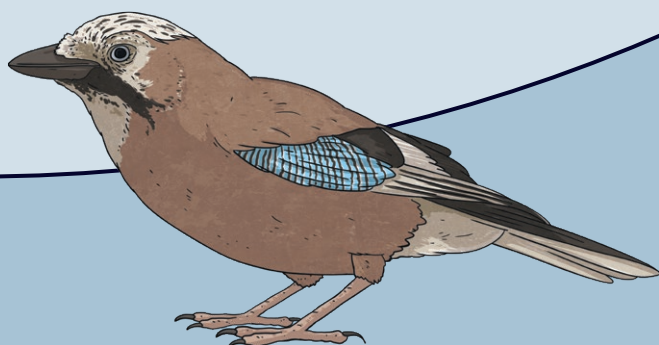
Throughout UK gardens and green spaces, a wide range of birds can be seen, though changes in population numbers have been witnessed in recent years.





According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely spotted bird. Despite this, their numbers have decreased significantly since the 1970s. In addition, the number of Starlings has greatly declined. Although the exact reason is unknown, it is thought that their food supply — which includes creatures such as earthworms and crane fly larvae — may have been affected by farming practices or dry summers.

Recently, there has been an increase of sightings in Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to provide vital nourishment during the winter, a technique referred to as 'caching'; one Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!



## Migration

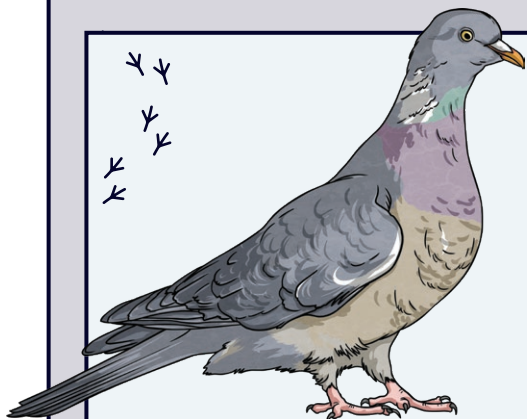
Migration is when birds travel from one place to another; some species do this on a seasonal basis and migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer. Some birds, such as Swifts, migrate to Africa, sometimes flying up to 200 miles in a day. Many die from starvation, exhaustion and storms.

## Different species of birds

Different species of birds have specific features. Beaks of different types of birds have evolved differently to support them in different ways, such as feeding themselves and their young, building nests and grooming themselves.

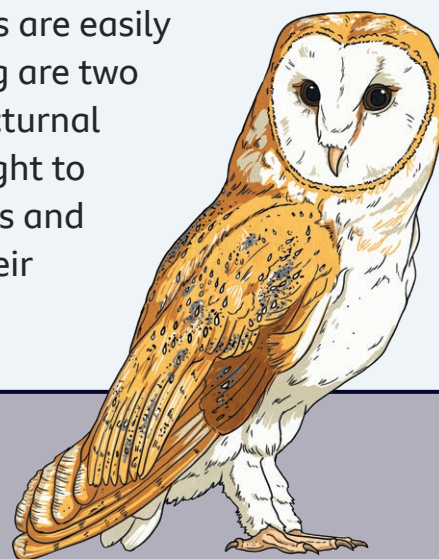


Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes. Their fine beak helps them to extract and crack seeds within thistles and teasels.



Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often scavenge for scraps of food; their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which mainly consists of seeds, nuts and berries. Woodpigeons (which make a recognisable cooing sound) are mostly grey with a white patch on their neck and white patches on their wings.

Due to their distinctive heart-shaped face, Barn Owls are easily identified. Excellent long-distance vision and hearing are two qualities which make them such avid hunters. As nocturnal creatures, Barn Owls scour open areas during the night to seize their prey of small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. In order to catch and tear apart the flesh of their prey, they use their sharp talons and curved beak.



## Glossary

**conservation:** The protection of wildlife or nature.



# Questions

1. What food do Starlings eat? Tick **two**.

- ☐ rodents
- ☐ earthworms
- ☐ snakes
- ☐ crane fly larvae

2. Draw **four** lines and match each word with the corresponding definition.

migration

To search thoroughly.

nocturnal

Food that is needed to help something or someone grow.

scour

The seasonal act of birds travelling from one place to another.

nourishment

To be active at night.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Regarded as natural pest \_\_\_\_\_, birds are vital in

\_\_\_\_\_ the levels of insects.

4. What does the RSPB recommend doing in order to attract a greater number of birds to gardens?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Look at the section **Why are birds important?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'help'.

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. ...Woodpigeons often scavenge for scraps of food...**

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'scavenge' to describe the Woodpigeons' behaviour?

---

---

---

**7. Compare one similarity between Goldfinches and another bird in the text.**

---

---

---

**8. Summarise in 30 words or fewer what you have learnt about migration.**

---

---

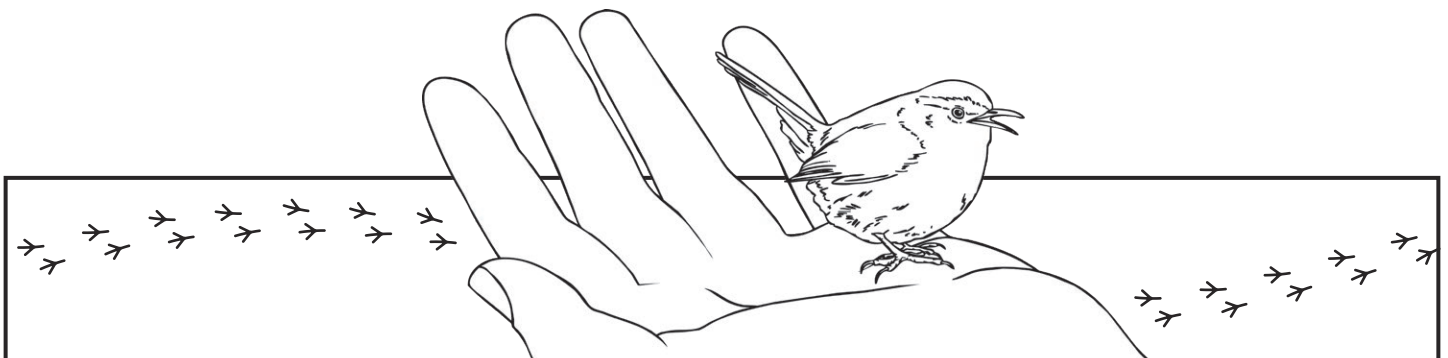
---

**9. What sort of qualities do you think someone who works for the RSPB needs to have? Explain your answer.**

---

---

---



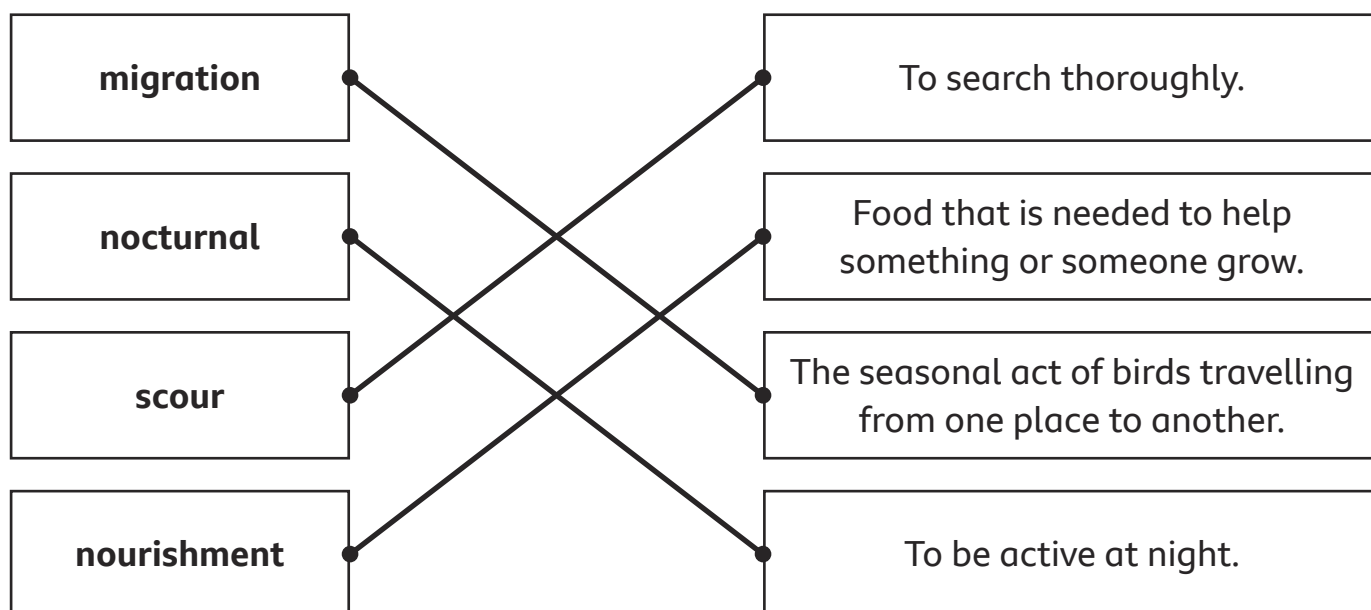


# Answers

1. What food do Starlings eat? Tick **two**.

- ☐ rodents
- ☒ **earthworms**
- ☐ snakes
- ☒ **crane fly larvae**

2. Draw **four** lines and match each word with the corresponding definition.



3. Fill in the missing words.

Regarded as natural pest **controllers**, birds are vital in **regulating** the levels of insects.

4. What does the RSPB recommend doing in order to attract a greater number of birds to gardens?

**The RSPB recommends adding birdbaths or feeders to gardens in order to attract a greater number of birds.**

5. Look at the section **Why are birds important?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'help'.

**benefit**

## 6. ...Woodpigeons often scavenge for scraps of food...

What do you think the author means by their choice of the word 'scavenge' to describe the Woodpigeons' behaviour?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the author means that Woodpigeons search through and eat other people's unwanted food or rubbish by their choice of the word 'scavenge'.**

## 7. Compare one similarity between Goldfinches and another bird in the text.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Goldfinches are similar to Woodpigeons as their beaks are adapted to eat seeds.**

## 8. Summarise in 30 words or fewer what you have learnt about migration.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Some birds travel from the UK during winter to another country and return when it is warmer. They face challenges when they travel, such as bad weather, starvation and exhaustion.**

## 9. What sort of qualities do you think someone who works for the RSPB needs to have? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think someone who works for the RSPB needs to be caring as they are responsible for helping to protect birds. I also think they need to be enthusiastic and passionate in order to help make a difference with their conservation work.**

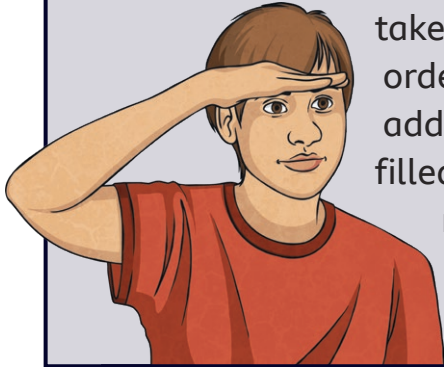


# Wild Birds

## The Big Schools' Birdwatch



The RSPB (otherwise known as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is a charity which helps the conservation of birds. Every year, they hold the Big Schools' Birdwatch where they encourage people to take part in birdwatching and report which species they see. In order to attract a greater number of birds, the RSPB recommends adding birdbaths or food sources to gardens; bird feeders can be filled with a variety of foods, such as fat balls and seeds but it is recommended to serve dried or live mealworms out of a flat dish. After the information is gathered, it is analysed to see whether there are any changes in bird populations.



## Why are birds important?

Birds benefit the environment in a number of significant ways. Crucially, they help to develop plant life as they disperse seeds which help plants grow in different places. Regarded as natural pest controllers, birds are vital in regulating the levels of insects. As they form the primary source of food for a wide range of birds, this effectively reduces the amount of damage to crops due to insect infestation.

Furthermore, some birds, such as Magpies and Crows, consume dead animals that could otherwise cause diseases.



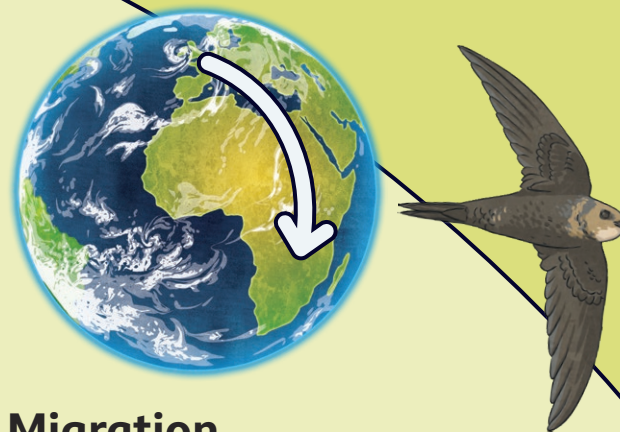
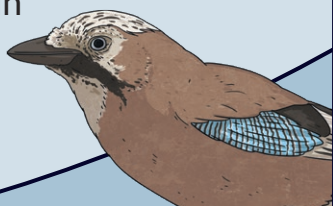
## Numbers of common garden birds

Throughout UK gardens and green spaces, a wide range of birds can be seen, though changes in population numbers have been witnessed in recent years.



According to previous results of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, House Sparrows are the most widely recognised bird. Despite this, their numbers have decreased significantly since the 1970s. In addition, the number of Starlings has greatly declined. Although the exact reason is unknown, it is thought that their food supply — which includes creatures such as earthworms and crane fly larvae — may have been affected by farming practices or dry summers.

Recently, there has been an increase in sightings of Jays, which are members of the Crow family. Jays are known for hoarding acorns in the autumn to provide vital nourishment during the winter, a technique referred to as 'caching'; one Jay can store around 8000 acorns each year!



## Migration

Migration is the annual act of birds (and other animals) travelling from one place to another; some species do this on a seasonal basis and migrate from the UK during the winter months and return when the weather becomes warmer. Some birds, such as Swifts, migrate to Africa, sometimes flying up to 200 miles in a day. Turbulent weather, such as storms or wildfires, can prove to be a challenging obstacle for migrating birds; many lose their lives due to this as well as other difficult factors, such as starvation and exhaustion.

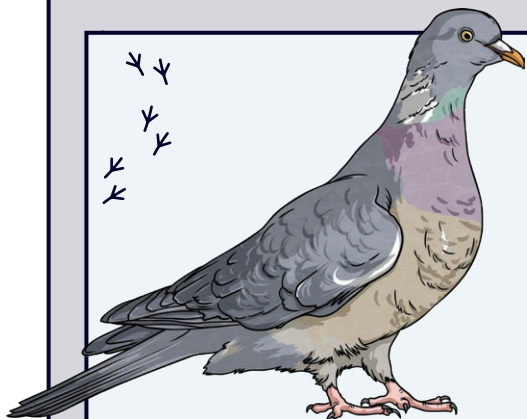
## Different species of birds

In response to their environment, birds have adapted in various ways and each species has distinguishable features. For example, the shape of a bird's beak has evolved to support them with their diet and in other ways, such as feeding their young, building nests and grooming themselves. A bird's beak, which is sometimes referred to as a bill, is made out of keratin; this is what human fingernails are also made from.



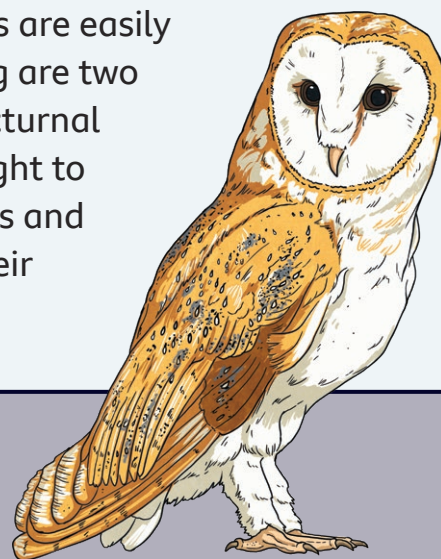


Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes while juveniles are duller in colour and have a brown-grey face. As Goldfinches predominantly eat seeds, their fine beak enables them to extract and crack those found within thistles and teasels.



Regularly found in parks and towns, Woodpigeons often scavenge for scraps of food; their beaks are adapted to suit their diet, which principally consists of seeds, nuts and berries. Woodpigeons (which make a recognisable cooing sound) are mostly grey with a white patch on their neck and white patches on their wings.

Due to their distinctive heart-shaped face, Barn Owls are easily identified. Excellent long-distance vision and hearing are two qualities which make them such avid hunters. As nocturnal creatures, Barn Owls scour open areas during the night to seize their prey of small mammals, such as voles, rats and mice. In order to catch and tear apart the flesh of their prey, they use their sharp talons and curved beak.





# Questions

1. What are birds' beaks made out of? Tick one.

- ☐ bone
- ☐ gelatin
- ☐ keratin
- ☐ cartilage

2. Underline **one** word in the quotation below that suggests that the birds are young.

*Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes while juveniles are duller in colour and have a brown-grey face.*

3. Fill in the missing words.

In response to their \_\_\_\_\_, birds have adapted in various ways and each species has \_\_\_\_\_ features.

4. Name two species of birds whose populations have declined.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. Look at the section **Migration**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'rough' or 'violent'.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Summarise in 30 words or fewer how birds benefit the environment.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of wild birds on farms. Give a reason for your answer.

---



---



---

8. Compare Jays with another creature of your choice. Explain how they are similar.

---



---



---

9. Predict what could be the biggest threat for the population of birds in the future.

---



---



---

10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Bird feeders can be filled with a variety of foods, such as fat balls and seeds.		
Swifts can fly 300 miles in one day.		
There has recently been a decrease in sightings of Jays.		
Woodpigeons have a white patch on their neck.		
Goldfinches use their curved beak to catch small mammals.		



# Answers

1. What are birds' beaks made out of? Tick one.

- ☐ bone
- ☐ gelatin
- ☒ **keratin**
- ☐ cartilage

2. Underline **one** word in the quotation below that suggests that the birds are young.

*Goldfinches are a small species of birds, with adults exhibiting a distinctive red face and a black cap around the eyes while juveniles are duller in colour and have a brown-grey face.*

3. Fill in the missing words.

In response to their **environment**, birds have adapted in various ways and each species has **distinguishable** features.

4. Name two species of birds whose populations have declined.

- **House Sparrows**
- **Starlings**

5. Look at the section **Migration**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'rough' or 'violent'.

**turbulent**

6. Summarise in 30 words or fewer how birds benefit the environment.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Birds control the level of insects by eating them and they disperse seeds which help plants grow in new places. Some birds eat rotting animals which would otherwise cause diseases.**



7. Explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of wild birds on farms. Give a reason for your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as:** One of the disadvantages of wild birds on farms is that some species may eat the produce that is grown on the farm. On the other hand, an advantage is that the birds can help control the levels of insects which should reduce crop damage.

8. Compare Jays with another creature of your choice. Explain how they are similar.

**Pupils' own responses, such as:** I think Jays are similar to squirrels because they gather and hoard acorns in autumn in order for them to have a store of food for them to eat in the winter.

9. Predict what could be the biggest threat for the population of birds in the future.

**Pupils' own responses, such as:** I predict that the biggest threat for the population of birds in the future could be deforestation as this could lead to lots of birds' habitats being destroyed.

10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Bird feeders can be filled with a variety of foods, such as fat balls and seeds.	✓	
Swifts can fly 300 miles in one day.		✓
There has recently been a decrease in sightings of Jays.		✓
Woodpigeons have a white patch on their neck.	✓	
Goldfinches use their curved beak to catch small mammals.		✓