The Manor House Spring Bird Trail

Can you find all the birds on our Bird Trail when you visit Castle Yard, at Ilkley Manor House, this Spring? Discover all nine painted stones with our favourite birds that visit our gardens. Look out for our little owl hidden in the trees too!

ILKLEY MANOR HOUSE

Bullfinch

Scientific name: Pyrrhula pyrrhula
Listen to the Bullfinch's song

A striking, but often overlooked little bird Bullfinches are often found in woodlands, orchards and hedgerows the bullfinch has a whistled call.

- The name 'bullfinch' comes from the bird's frontheavy, bull-headed appearance.
- Males have a vibrant pink/ red breast, whilst females have yellow/buff chest.
- Bullfinches weigh 21-27grammes and have a wingspan of 22-26cm

Sparrow

Scientific name Passer domesticus
Listen to the Sparrow's song

Noisy and gregarious, the house sparrow that we often see in our gardens has a simple song, just a series of cheeps and chirps!

- House sparrows live for around three years. However, the current longevity for record for this species is 12 years and 12 days old.
- Once one of Britain's commonest birds, numbers of house sparrow have drastically declined in recent years.
- Sparrow weight around 24-38g and have a wing span of 21-25.5cm

Blue Tit

Scientific name: Cyanistes caeruleus
Listen to the Blue Tit's song

A colourful visitor to our gardens bird feeders, these little birds are a mix of blue, yellow, white and green markings.

- Blue tits live for around three years and the current longevity record for this species is 10 years and three months!
- Blue tits eat Insects, caterpillars, seeds and nuts and in winter, family flocks join up with other tits as they search for food.
- Blue tits weight 11grammes and have a wingspan of 18cm.

Blackbird

Scientific name: Turdus merula
Listen to the Blackbird's song

One of our most common garden birds in the UK you'll spot the male blackbird with its distinctive bright orange – yellow beak and eye-ring. Females are brown, and sometimes have spots or streaks on their fronts.

- The blackbird is the most numerous breeding bird in the British Isles, with a population of around 6 million pairs.
- You might hear blackbirds after its gone dark and they will sing under artificial light. Their call has various clucking and rattling sounds.
- The song Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye, four-and-twenty blackbirds, baked in a pie was actually a coded message used to recruit crew members for the notorious 18th-century pirate Blackbeard.

Thrush

Scientific name: Turdus philomelos
Listen to the Thrush's song

Thrush are on the RSPB red list – red being the highest conservation priority – as their numbers have declined markedly on farm land and in towns and cities.

- Though song thrushes can be heard singing at any time of day, they aren't early risers! They don't join the dawn chorus until blackbirds and robins have already started
- They build their neat mud-lined cup nests in a bush or tree and lay four or five dark-spotted blue eggs, two or three times a year.
- The typical lifespan of a trush is 3 years, but the maximum recorded age is 10 years 8 months.

Jackdaw

Scientific name: Corvus monedula
Listen to the Jackdaw's song

Jackdaws are part of the corvid family, which also including magpies, ravens, crows and rooks & the Jackdaw's pale eyes and silvery sheen to the back of its head will help you spot them.

- Jackdaws form very strong bonds with their mates and are known for their devotion to their partner
- Jackdaws are very clever & can be taught tricks!
- Jackdaws feed on insects, fruit, seeds and scraps but they are also carrion eaters, which means they will pick at road kill or even take other birds' eggs.

Greater Spotted Woodpecker

Scientific name: Dendrocopos major
Listen to the Woodpecker's song

There is no mistaking the distinctive Greater Spotted Woodpecker on your garden feeder with its striking black, white and red colouring.

- There are two species of spotted woodpeckers in the British Isles: the great (not greater) and lesser.
- Woodpeckers have shock-absorbent tissue between the base of the bill and the skull to cushion the impact of drumming.
- An unpaired male may drum as many as 600 times a day; a paired male just 200 times.

Robin

Scientific name: Erithacus rubecula
Listen to the Robin's song

One of the nation's favourite birds the robin until the early years of the 20th century the robin was usually known as the redbreast. They are famous for their tameness, when digging in the garden you might find them bobbing around you within touching distance!

- They have a unique breast pattern which means they can be recognised individually.
- Despite their cute appearance, they are aggressively territorial and are quick to drive away intruders, sometimes fighting to the death!
- The first British postmen wore red coats, and gained the nickname of robin or redbreast

Jay

Scientific name: Garrulus glandarius
Listen to the Jay's song

Jays are shy but when you spot one, you'll see that they are colourful bird. A member of the crow family they have a distinctive screaming call

- Jays are important dispersers of oak trees. The bird's specific name, glandarius, translates as 'of acorns,' which alludes to the bird's habit of caching the nuts for the winter.
- Jays are skilful mimics! When threatened, they are likely to imitate the calls of tawny owls, sparrowhawks and even cats!
- Jays weigh around 140-190grammes which is about the same as a can of beans!

Tawny Owl

Scientific name: Strix aluco
Listen to the Owl's hoot

About size of a woodpigeon, tawny owls have a rounded body and head, with a ring of dark feathers around its face surrounding the dark eyes

- Only the male owl utters the familiar drawn-out hoot: both males and female also make the well-known kewick call
- Tawny owls eat small mammals, rodents, small birds, frogs, fish, insects and worms
- The tawny owl is nocturnal so it is often heard calling at night, but much less often seen.

If would like to learn how to identity birds for their songs along, why not check out this great page from the RSPB?

It's a bird song ID playlist with some of the common birds you'll find in and around your garden or local area.

https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-songs/what-bird-is-that/