

CONSERVATION & HOW TO GET INVOLVED

While still a familiar and widespread bird in the UK, song thrush numbers have halved since the 1970s. Despite a slight recovery over the last decade there has been a continuing small decline in London, the south and east of England. Most severe in farmland areas, urban numbers have also suffered. Their decline is known to result from poor survival of young birds but the precise reasons are poorly understood. Increased use of molluscicides, decreased availability of soil invertebrates (e.g. in drier summers), predation and competition with blackbirds have all been suggested.

Richmond Biodiversity Partnership's Song Thrush Action Plan aims to prevent any further decline, encourage numbers in Richmond and support conservation and spread of song thrushes across London. Two things that will go a long way to help song thrushes in your garden are:

- ❖ Avoid using slug pellets or other molluscicides that not only reduce the numbers of slugs for thrushes to eat, but are also toxic to the birds. Instead try alternative methods of slug control.
- ❖ Provide suitable nest sites in dense shrubby areas of your garden. Thick hedges are ideal, but any substantial bushes will help. This habitat is declining in public open spaces, increasing the importance of garden nest sites.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Markedly smaller than blackbirds at about 20-23cms, song thrushes are the second smallest of six thrush species regularly occurring in Britain. Both sexes have warm brown upperparts, buff flanks, buff/orange-yellow underwings, short tails and heavily spotted underparts, the spots often arranged in lines.

Similar species with which song thrush might be confused include mistle thrush, redwing, fieldfare and female blackbirds. Distinguishing features include:

- ❖ **Mistle thrush (27cm)** Largest thrush with more upright stance, bold more rounded spots and white underwings. Longer, white edged tails, these birds are more shy and nest higher up.
- ❖ **Redwing (20cm)** White or creamy prominent eyebrow. Chestnut flanks and streaked not spotted breasts. Red flanks and underwings. Common winter visitors (between October & April) often in mixed flocks with fieldfares.
- ❖ **Fieldfare (25cm)** Longer wings and tails than blackbirds. Big, grey-headed with pale grey rump, black tail and white underwings. Common winter visitors, gregarious in mixed flocks with starlings and redwings. Often found in open fields & around bushes with berries.
- ❖ **Female blackbird (25cm)** Rich brown, whitish throat, long tail and faintly speckled breast.



FURTHER INFORMATION

- ❖ Richmond Biodiversity Partnership: www.richmond.gov.uk/biodiversity
- ❖ Richmond Song Thrush Species Action Plan: www.richenvironmentnet.org.uk/Links.aspx#Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan
- ❖ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds RSPB: www.rspb.org.uk
- ❖ British Trust for Ornithology BTO: www.bto.org

This leaflet has been produced by the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership and funded by Parks Improvement Programme. © Richmond Biodiversity Partnership 2010.

Text by Alison Fure, Keith Martin and Richmond Biodiversity Partnership. Photographs by Alison Fure, Phil Kirk, Nigel Reeve and Keith Martin.

Please contact us if you need this in Braille, large print, audio tape, or another language on 0845 612 2660.

Richmond Biodiversity Partnership,
c/o Parks and Open Spaces,
Civic Centre, 44 York Street,
Twickenham TW1 3BZ
www.richmond.gov.uk/biodiversity

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکلی دارید لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر مراجعه نمایید تا ترتیب ترجمه تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود:

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi ejani ne receptionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit.



Song Thrush





ABOUT SONG THRUSHES

The loud and proclaiming song thrush can be heard throughout the year, but it is most noticeable in the breeding season, especially before dawn and after sunset. Clear, flute-like phrases and repetitions make this one of our most charismatic native songbirds.

Song thrushes in Britain can be residents, summer and winter visitors or passage migrants. Familiar garden birds, they are found anywhere there is a mixture of trees, bushes, hedges and clearings. Birds characteristically hop and run across open ground, foraging for worms, slugs, snails, other invertebrates and in autumn/winter berries and fruit.

Snails form a special part of the song thrush's diet; the latest research suggests the birds only eat snails when the ground has become too hard to dig worms out. Broken shells often litter the ground around favourite 'anvils' habitually used to hammer snails open.

The song thrush builds mud-lined cup-shaped nests low down in dense shrubs, creepers on walls or on the ground amongst thick vegetation. Both parents

help to raise two or three broods (laying 3-5 blue, black-spotted eggs) from March to July.

SONG THRUSH IN RICHMOND

Headstones at Grove Chapel Cemetery make favoured song thrush anvils, and at Kilmoray Mausoleum pieces of York stone are left for the thrushes. An old asbestos sheet used by a song thrush along Teddington riverside was found covered in almost 50 broken snail shells.

Generally the song thrush is doing well across Richmond with birds breeding in parks, gardens and other open spaces across the borough.

Places to visit where they are known to breed include: Barnes Common and playing fields, the Wetland Centre, Leg o'Mutton, Crane Park Island and along the Crane River Corridor, Petersham, Terrace Gardens, Ham & East Sheen Commons, Hampton, and especially woodland areas of Bushy and Richmond Parks.

Although widespread throughout Richmond one of the best places to find song thrushes is Ham Lands. Although records demonstrate Ham Lands' year round importance, it is especially valued by the birds in winter. Resident thrushes are joined by continental birds which fly in to overwinter. A standard walk undertaken annually to count singing males counted 17 territories in 2010.



FACT ABOUT SONG THRUSHES

Robert Browning portrayed the thrush's characteristic song:

*That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!*

Places to see song thrushes in Richmond Borough

(some host bird walks, check websites for details)

✦ Friends of River Crane Environment:
www.force.org.uk



✦ Friends of Richmond Park:
www.frp.org.uk

✦ Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew:
www.kew.org

✦ The Royal Parks - Richmond Park and Bushy Park: www.royalparks.org.uk

✦ Historic Royal Palaces - Hampton Court Palace:
www.hrp.org.uk/HamptonCourtPalace

✦ WWT London Wetland Centre:
www.wwt.org.uk

✦ Ham Lands
✦ Barnes Common
✦ Leg o' Mutton
✦ Crane Park Island:
www.wildlondon.org.uk