

Birds of Dumfries

A checklist of the birds recorded in and around Dumfries · 94 species

☐		Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	A ghost-pale hunter that quarters rough grassland at dusk on silent wings, and often by day in hard winters.
☐		Barnacle Goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	The Solway's signature bird — the entire Svalbard population winters here and almost nowhere else.
☐		Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	The small gull whose hood is actually dark chocolate-brown, and only there for half the year.
☐		Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	The rich, unhurried song from a rooftop at dusk — the sound of a Dumfries spring evening.
☐		Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	A rich, tumbling song from deep in the scrub, and a cap that is black on males and warm brown on females.
☐		Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Blue cap, yellow breast, no fear of anything — the acrobat of every feeder in town.
☐		Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	A soft, mournful piping from inside a hedge, then a flash of white rump as it slips away.
☐		Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>	Introduced from North America three centuries ago, and now thoroughly at home on the town pond.
☐		Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	All black, all business, and usually on its own — the crow that is not a rook.
☐		Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	An accelerating rattle that ends in a flourish — and a different accent depending where you are.
☐		Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Named after its own song — a flat, insistent 'chiff-chaff' from high in a bare March tree.
☐		Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	The smallest of our tits — grabs a seed and vanishes, hiding it somewhere for later.
☐		Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Unknown in Britain before the 1950s — it walked here from the Balkans in a single human lifetime.
☐		Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	The plaintive mewing overhead — now the commonest bird of prey in Britain, and back from near-extinction here.
☐		Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Everyone knows the call; far fewer have seen the bird, and fewer still after early July.
☐		Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Holds its head perfectly still while the rest of it works hard to hang in the wind.

☐		Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	A deep, resonant 'cronk' from overhead, and a bird far bigger than any crow has a right to be.
☐		Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Never quite still — the rust-red tail shivers constantly, even when the rest of the bird does not.
☐		Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	A small, bobbing wader of upland rivers and lochs, gone again by autumn.
☐		Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	A 'sea swallow' — long tail streamers, a hovering pause, and then a clean vertical plunge.
☐		Common Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>	Bursts out of a bramble, sings a scratchy phrase into the air, and drops straight back in.
☐		Common Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	The heavy clatter of wings from a hedge, and a five-note coo that always seems to stop one note early.
☐		Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	Sooty black with a white bill and forehead shield — and spectacularly bad-tempered with its neighbours.
☐		Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	A big, black, primeval-looking fisher often seen holding its wings out to dry.
☐		Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	The bubbling song over spring moorland, and the long downcurved bill — Britain's biggest wader, and in serious trouble.
☐		Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	The only songbird in Britain that walks underwater, hunting the riverbed for grubs and larvae.
☐		Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Flocks that turn as one over the mudflats, flashing dark then silver-white in the same second.
☐		Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	The quiet grey-brown bird shuffling under the feeder — overlooked, and with a startlingly complicated love life.
☐		Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Big, grey-headed northern thrushes that arrive in chattering flocks to strip the hedgerows bare.
☐		Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	Britain's smallest bird, weighing about the same as a ten-pence piece.
☐		Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>	A dapper diving duck with a golden eye and a Nith estuary and loch address, but only for the winter.
☐		Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	A red face, gold wing bars and a tinkling call — a charm of goldfinches is worth the name.
☐		Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	A big, elegant sawbill duck that nests up quiet rivers in summer and gathers on open water once the cold sets in.
☐		Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	A bird you'll almost certainly hear before you ever see — its reeling song sounds more like an insect or a fishing reel than a bird.

☐		Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	That short, hard burst of drumming in March is not feeding — it is a bird announcing itself.
☐		Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	The black stripe down a yellow chest, and a two-note 'tea-cher' that carries right across the garden.
☐		Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	The laugh — a loud, ringing 'yaffle' — carries across a field long before you find the bird.
☐		Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Stocky, olive-green and heavy-billed — and much scarcer at the feeder than it used to be.
☐		Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Stands in the shallows without moving for twenty minutes, then strikes faster than you can follow.
☐		Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	A slim, tail-bobbing bird of fast water that flashes lemon-yellow underneath, despite the drab-sounding name.
☐		Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	The ancestor of the farmyard goose — and the one that actually sounds like a goose.
☐		Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	The classic 'seagull' — a bulky, silver-backed gull equally at home on cliffs, harbours and rooftops.
☐		House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	The mud cup under the eaves — built one beakful at a time, and often reused for years.
☐		House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	The noisy, squabbling bird of hedges and eaves that we only noticed once it started disappearing.
☐		Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	The small grey-hooded crow with pale eyes that nests in your chimney and knows exactly what you are doing.
☐		Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Our most colourful crow, and the reason a good many oak trees are where they are.
☐		Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	A dart of electric blue along the river — usually heard before it's ever seen.
☐		Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	A crested farmland plover famed for its tumbling display flight and huge winter flocks.
☐		Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	Slate-grey back and yellow legs — the herring gull's darker cousin, and once a bird that always left for winter.
☐		Lesser Redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	A tiny, red-capped finch that spends summer quietly in birch woodland and winter hanging acrobatically from the thinnest twigs.
☐		Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	A dazzling all-white heron, a recent and still-spreading arrival in south-west Scotland.
☐		Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	A tiny, dumpy diving bird that vanishes underwater at the first sign of trouble.

☐		Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	A flying teaspoon — and never alone: where there is one, there are a dozen close behind.
☐		Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	Black and white at a glance — but catch the light and the tail is bottle-green and violet.
☐		Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	The everyday duck of ponds and rivers everywhere, and the ancestor of nearly every domestic duck breed.
☐		Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	The small brown bird that flushes from the grass in front of you, calling thinly as it goes.
☐		Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	A red-billed, white-flanked bird that jerks its way across ponds and riverbanks, as at home walking as swimming.
☐		Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	Orange bill with a black knob at the base — the swan that is here all year, and not silent at all.
☐		Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i>	The only British bird that routinely walks head-first down a tree trunk.
☐		Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Black, white and loud, with a carrot-orange bill built for opening shellfish.
☐		Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	The fastest animal on earth — and increasingly likely to be nesting on a building rather than a crag.
☐		Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	A crisp black-and-white summer visitor to the oakwoods — and a reliable taker of nest boxes.
☐		Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Runs across the supermarket car park in short bursts, tail pumping the whole time.
☐		Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Skeins yelping across a September sky — for many people the first real sign that autumn has arrived.
☐		Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	Deeply forked tail, constantly twisting — a bird brought back to Galloway deliberately, and now breeding here.
☐		Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	The noisy 'sentinel of the marsh' whose alarm call sets every wader on the mudflat to flight.
☐		Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Listen on an October night — the thin 'seep' overhead is redwings arriving in the dark.
☐		Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Black hood, white collar and a song so unhurried it sounds like the bird has forgotten how it ends.
☐		Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	The gardener's shadow — bold, orange-breasted and singing on the darkest days of the year.
☐		Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Never alone: rooks live, feed and nest in company, in the clattering treetop colonies called rookeries.

☐		Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	The first summer migrant back each spring, nesting in noisy colonies of burrows dug straight into the riverbank.
☐		Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	A scratchy, never-repeating song pouring out of the reeds — one of the surest signs that a wetland has come back to life for summer.
☐		Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	A streaky yellow-green finch that hangs upside down from the tips of branches, and turns up at garden feeders in force once winter bites.
☐		Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Song pouring down out of an empty sky from a bird too high to see.
☐		Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	A superbly camouflaged wetland wader best known for the eerie 'drumming' sound of its display flight.
☐		Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Sings every phrase two or three times over, as if making sure you heard it.
☐		Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Comes through the garden low and fast, round the corner of the house, and is gone before you register it.
☐		Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Sits bolt upright on a fence post, flies out, snaps up a fly, and returns to exactly the same perch.
☐		Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Black at a distance, iridescent purple and green close up — and capable of imitating a car alarm.
☐		Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	A tidy, iridescent-necked pigeon that nests in tree holes and old buildings, easily overlooked next to its brasher cousins.
☐		Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Perches on the very top of a gorse bush and scolds you with a sound like two pebbles knocked together.
☐		Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Glossy blue-black and forked-tailed, skimming low over fields and farmyards — the clearest sign that summer has properly arrived.
☐		Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	A sooty, scythe-winged flier that eats, sleeps and even mates in the air — and is only ever seen for a few frantic summer weeks.
☐		Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	The classic 'twit-twoo' owl of Dumfries gardens and woodland, actually a male's hoot answered by a female's sharp call.
☐		Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	Our smallest duck, and the one that springs vertically off the water when flushed.
☐		Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	Like a house sparrow drawn more carefully — chestnut cap, and a black comma on a white cheek.
☐		Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	A scrap of bark that turns out to be a bird, spiralling steadily up a tree trunk in search of hidden insects.
☐		Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Black and white, golden-eyed, with a drooping ponytail — and forever disappearing underwater mid-sentence.

☐		Waxwing <i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	A crested, berry-loving visitor from the far north that only turns up some winters — but when it does, it arrives in style.
☐		Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Straight neck, yellow wedge on the bill, and a bugling call from birds that flew here from Iceland.
☐		Wigeon <i>Mareca penelope</i>	The drake's clear rising whistle across a winter marsh is one of the great Solway sounds.
☐		Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	A soft, descending cascade of notes that fades away at the end — the sound of April birchwoods.
☐		Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Britain's commonest bird, and one of its smallest — a brown scrap with a startlingly loud voice.
☐		Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	'A little bit of bread and no cheese' — sung from a hedge top through the heat of a July afternoon.

Photograph credits

Photo by Michael Gäbler, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Andreas Trepte, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Hans Hillewaert, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Charles J. Sharp, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Francis Franklin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Rror, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Alexis Lours, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by caroline legg, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by stevem4560, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Andy Morffew from Itchen Abbas, Hampshire, UK, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Frank Schulenburg, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Jerzy Strzelecki, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by MPF, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Bengt Nyman from Vaxholm, Sweden, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Christian Ferrer, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Alun Williams333, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Charles Homler d/b/a FocusOnWildlife, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Francis C. Franklin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sbern/>, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Giles Laurent, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Quartl, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Afsarnayakkan, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Martin Kunz, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Laitche, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Diliff, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Lukasz Lukomski, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Rhododendrites, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by heder.a.baltica from Wrocław, Poland, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Luc Viatour, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by MPF, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Ігор Червоненко, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Acarpentier, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Sanchezn, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Isiwai, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Mykola Swarnyk, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by GT1976, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Jac. Janssen from BAARLO LB, NL, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Hansueli Krapf, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by cazalegg, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by User:Diliff, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Cephas, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Dion Art, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Бисел B.A., CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Tisha Mukherjee, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by pau.artigas, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Zhanna Tyshchuk, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Nature on your doorstep / Dumfries — part of Love Dumfries · lovedumfries.co.uk/nature