

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A minute, restless, olive-green bird with a pale wing bar, a plain face dominated by a large dark eye, and a bright central crown stripe — yellow on females, flame-orange on males. Goldcrests are birds of conifers, so they are commonest in the plantations, churchyard yews and garden cypresses around Dumfries. They are easily missed: the first clue is usually the song, which is so high that many adults cannot hear it at all.

BEHAVIOUR

Goldcrests feed frantically, flicking through the outer needles of conifers and hovering briefly to pick tiny insects and spiders from the underside of foliage. They have to eat almost constantly through daylight in winter to survive the night. In autumn they join mixed tit flocks, and numbers around town are boosted by immigrants that cross the North Sea from Scandinavia — a startling journey for a bird of this weight.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Kinglets (Regulidae)
SIZE	9 cm · Britain's smallest bird
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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