

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Bird · Resident · here all year



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Unmistakable and increasingly common: a crimson face bordered with black and white, warm buff body, and black wings crossed by a broad band of brilliant gold. Goldfinches have moved into Dumfries gardens in force over the last two decades, drawn by nyjer and sunflower hearts, and are also found wherever thistles, teasels and knapweed set seed on rough ground and roadside verges.

BEHAVIOUR

The fine, tweezer-like bill is a specialist tool for extracting seeds other finches cannot reach — teasel heads in particular, which males with slightly longer bills work more successfully than females. Flocks feed acrobatically, hanging from swaying seedheads, and keep up a constant liquid tinkling chatter. The collective name, a charm, comes from that sound.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Finches (Fringillidae)
SIZE	12 cm · smaller than a sparrow
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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