

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A slight, streaky olive-brown bird with pale underparts, fine dark streaking, pink legs and a thin insect-eater's bill. Meadow pipits are abundant in open country across the region — rough grazing, moorland, the Solway merse — and are one of the most numerous breeding birds of the Galloway uplands, though easy to dismiss as just another small brown bird. They move down to lower ground and the coast in winter.

BEHAVIOUR

Meadow pipits have their own version of the skylark's display: the male climbs steeply, then descends on stiff, spread wings and tail like a falling shuttlecock, singing an accelerating series of thin notes. On the ground they walk rather than hop, picking insects from among grass stems. They are the commonest host of the cuckoo in upland Britain, and a pipit feeding a vastly larger cuckoo chick is a classic local sight.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Wagtails and pipits (Motacillidae)
SIZE	14.5 cm · sparrow-sized
UK STATUS	Amber-listed

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