

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Bird · Resident · here all year



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Warm brown above and cream below with neat arrowhead spots across the breast, the song thrush is smaller and more delicately marked than the mistle thrush it is often confused with. It favours gardens with mature shrubs, woodland edge and hedgerow, and is widespread but noticeably thinner on the ground than it once was — a long national decline that put it on the red list.

BEHAVIOUR

The giveaway is the repetition: each short musical phrase is sung two, three or four times before the bird moves on to the next, from a high exposed perch. Song thrushes are also the local specialists in snails, carrying them to a favourite stone — an 'anvil' — and hammering them open. Broken shell fragments scattered round a rock in a border are a reliable sign one is working the garden.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Thrushes (Turdidae)
SIZE	23 cm · smaller than a blackbird
UK STATUS	Red-listed

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