

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Bird · Summer migrant · May-Sep



Photo by Бусел В.А., CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A plain, slim, upright grey-brown bird with a streaked crown and breast — easy to overlook until it starts hunting, at which point it is unmistakable. Spotted flycatchers are among the last migrants to arrive, rarely before mid-May, and favour churchyards, large gardens, parkland and woodland edge around Dumfries where there are open perches and plenty of flying insects. They have declined steeply and are now a real find.

BEHAVIOUR

The hunting method defines the bird: it perches motionless and very upright, watches, then sallies out in a fast twisting flight to take an insect on the wing — often with an audible snap of the bill — and returns to the same perch to wait again. Nests are built in creepers, wall crevices and open-fronted boxes, and the late arrival is timed to the peak of large flying insects.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Old World flycatchers (Muscicapidae)
SIZE	14.5 cm · sparrow-sized
UK STATUS	Red-listed

Photo by Бусел В.А., CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons