

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Bird · Summer migrant · Apr-Sep



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Almost identical to a chiffchaff to look at — small, olive above and pale yellow below — but usually cleaner and yellower, with a more obvious pale stripe over the eye and, most usefully, pale pinkish legs rather than dark ones. Willow warblers are common summer birds of birch scrub, young plantation and damp woodland edge around Dumfries, and are far more numerous in Scotland than in southern England.

BEHAVIOUR

The song settles the identification instantly: a gentle, wistful series of notes that runs down the scale and dies away, quite unlike the chiffchaff's flat repetition. Willow warblers feed on small insects gleaned from foliage, working through birch and willow with quick, light movements. They are unusual among British birds in moulting all their feathers twice a year, once here and once in Africa.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Leaf warblers (Phylloscopidae)
SIZE	10.5-11.5 cm · smaller than a sparrow
UK STATUS	Amber-listed

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