

Out this month — August

Birds to look for in and around Dumfries · 84 species

☐		Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	A ghost-pale hunter that quarters rough grassland at dusk on silent wings, and often by day in hard winters.
☐		Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	The small gull whose hood is actually dark chocolate-brown, and only there for half the year.
☐		Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	The rich, unhurried song from a rooftop at dusk — the sound of a Dumfries spring evening.
☐		Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	A rich, tumbling song from deep in the scrub, and a cap that is black on males and warm brown on females.
☐		Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Blue cap, yellow breast, no fear of anything — the acrobat of every feeder in town.
☐		Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	A soft, mournful piping from inside a hedge, then a flash of white rump as it slips away.
☐		Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>	Introduced from North America three centuries ago, and now thoroughly at home on the town pond.
☐		Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	All black, all business, and usually on its own — the crow that is not a rook.
☐		Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	An accelerating rattle that ends in a flourish — and a different accent depending where you are.
☐		Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Named after its own song — a flat, insistent 'chiff-chaff' from high in a bare March tree.
☐		Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	The smallest of our tits — grabs a seed and vanishes, hiding it somewhere for later.
☐		Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Unknown in Britain before the 1950s — it walked here from the Balkans in a single human lifetime.
☐		Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	The plaintive mewing overhead — now the commonest bird of prey in Britain, and back from near-extinction here.
☐		Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Holds its head perfectly still while the rest of it works hard to hang in the wind.
☐		Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	A deep, resonant 'cronk' from overhead, and a bird far bigger than any crow has a right to be.
☐		Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Never quite still — the rust-red tail shivers constantly, even when the rest of the bird does not.

☐		Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	A small, bobbing wader of upland rivers and lochs, gone again by autumn.
☐		Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	A 'sea swallow' — long tail streamers, a hovering pause, and then a clean vertical plunge.
☐		Common Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>	Bursts out of a bramble, sings a scratchy phrase into the air, and drops straight back in.
☐		Common Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	The heavy clatter of wings from a hedge, and a five-note coo that always seems to stop one note early.
☐		Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	Sooty black with a white bill and forehead shield — and spectacularly bad-tempered with its neighbours.
☐		Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	A big, black, primeval-looking fisher often seen holding its wings out to dry.
☐		Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	The bubbling song over spring moorland, and the long downcurved bill — Britain's biggest wader, and in serious trouble.
☐		Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	The only songbird in Britain that walks underwater, hunting the riverbed for grubs and larvae.
☐		Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Flocks that turn as one over the mudflats, flashing dark then silver-white in the same second.
☐		Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	The quiet grey-brown bird shuffling under the feeder — overlooked, and with a startlingly complicated love life.
☐		Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	Britain's smallest bird, weighing about the same as a ten-pence piece.
☐		Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	A red face, gold wing bars and a tinkling call — a charm of goldfinches is worth the name.
☐		Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	A big, elegant sawbill duck that nests up quiet rivers in summer and gathers on open water once the cold sets in.
☐		Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	A bird you'll almost certainly hear before you ever see — its reeling song sounds more like an insect or a fishing reel than a bird.
☐		Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	That short, hard burst of drumming in March is not feeding — it is a bird announcing itself.
☐		Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	The black stripe down a yellow chest, and a two-note 'tea-cher' that carries right across the garden.
☐		Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	The laugh — a loud, ringing 'yaffle' — carries across a field long before you find the bird.
☐		Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Stocky, olive-green and heavy-billed — and much scarcer at the feeder than it used to be.

☐		Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Stands in the shallows without moving for twenty minutes, then strikes faster than you can follow.
☐		Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	A slim, tail-bobbing bird of fast water that flashes lemon-yellow underneath, despite the drab-sounding name.
☐		Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	The ancestor of the farmyard goose — and the one that actually sounds like a goose.
☐		Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	The classic 'seagull' — a bulky, silver-backed gull equally at home on cliffs, harbours and rooftops.
☐		House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	The mud cup under the eaves — built one beakful at a time, and often reused for years.
☐		House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	The noisy, squabbling bird of hedges and eaves that we only noticed once it started disappearing.
☐		Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	The small grey-hooded crow with pale eyes that nests in your chimney and knows exactly what you are doing.
☐		Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Our most colourful crow, and the reason a good many oak trees are where they are.
☐		Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	A dart of electric blue along the river — usually heard before it's ever seen.
☐		Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	A crested farmland plover famed for its tumbling display flight and huge winter flocks.
☐		Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	Slate-grey back and yellow legs — the herring gull's darker cousin, and once a bird that always left for winter.
☐		Lesser Redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	A tiny, red-capped finch that spends summer quietly in birch woodland and winter hanging acrobatically from the thinnest twigs.
☐		Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	A dazzling all-white heron, a recent and still-spreading arrival in south-west Scotland.
☐		Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	A tiny, dumpy diving bird that vanishes underwater at the first sign of trouble.
☐		Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	A flying teaspoon — and never alone: where there is one, there are a dozen close behind.
☐		Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	Black and white at a glance — but catch the light and the tail is bottle-green and violet.
☐		Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	The everyday duck of ponds and rivers everywhere, and the ancestor of nearly every domestic duck breed.
☐		Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	The small brown bird that flushes from the grass in front of you, calling thinly as it goes.

☐		Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	A red-billed, white-flanked bird that jerks its way across ponds and riverbanks, as at home walking as swimming.
☐		Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	Orange bill with a black knob at the base — the swan that is here all year, and not silent at all.
☐		Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i>	The only British bird that routinely walks head-first down a tree trunk.
☐		Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Black, white and loud, with a carrot-orange bill built for opening shellfish.
☐		Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	The fastest animal on earth — and increasingly likely to be nesting on a building rather than a crag.
☐		Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	A crisp black-and-white summer visitor to the oakwoods — and a reliable taker of nest boxes.
☐		Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Runs across the supermarket car park in short bursts, tail pumping the whole time.
☐		Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	Deeply forked tail, constantly twisting — a bird brought back to Galloway deliberately, and now breeding here.
☐		Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	The noisy 'sentinel of the marsh' whose alarm call sets every wader on the mudflat to flight.
☐		Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Black hood, white collar and a song so unhurried it sounds like the bird has forgotten how it ends.
☐		Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	The gardener's shadow — bold, orange-breasted and singing on the darkest days of the year.
☐		Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Never alone: rooks live, feed and nest in company, in the clattering treetop colonies called rookeries.
☐		Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	The first summer migrant back each spring, nesting in noisy colonies of burrows dug straight into the riverbank.
☐		Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	A scratchy, never-repeating song pouring out of the reeds — one of the surest signs that a wetland has come back to life for summer.
☐		Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	A streaky yellow-green finch that hangs upside down from the tips of branches, and turns up at garden feeders in force once winter bites.
☐		Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Song pouring down out of an empty sky from a bird too high to see.
☐		Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	A superbly camouflaged wetland wader best known for the eerie 'drumming' sound of its display flight.
☐		Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Sings every phrase two or three times over, as if making sure you heard it.

☐		Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Comes through the garden low and fast, round the corner of the house, and is gone before you register it.
☐		Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Sits bolt upright on a fence post, flies out, snaps up a fly, and returns to exactly the same perch.
☐		Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Black at a distance, iridescent purple and green close up — and capable of imitating a car alarm.
☐		Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	A tidy, iridescent-necked pigeon that nests in tree holes and old buildings, easily overlooked next to its brasher cousins.
☐		Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Perches on the very top of a gorse bush and scolds you with a sound like two pebbles knocked together.
☐		Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Glossy blue-black and forked-tailed, skimming low over fields and farmyards — the clearest sign that summer has properly arrived.
☐		Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	A sooty, scythe-winged flier that eats, sleeps and even mates in the air — and is only ever seen for a few frantic summer weeks.
☐		Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	The classic 'twit-twoo' owl of Dumfries gardens and woodland, actually a male's hoot answered by a female's sharp call.
☐		Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	Like a house sparrow drawn more carefully — chestnut cap, and a black comma on a white cheek.
☐		Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	A scrap of bark that turns out to be a bird, spiralling steadily up a tree trunk in search of hidden insects.
☐		Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Black and white, golden-eyed, with a drooping ponytail — and forever disappearing underwater mid-sentence.
☐		Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	A soft, descending cascade of notes that fades away at the end — the sound of April birchwoods.
☐		Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Britain's commonest bird, and one of its smallest — a brown scrap with a startlingly loud voice.
☐		Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	'A little bit of bread and no cheese' — sung from a hedge top through the heat of a July afternoon.

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