



Surrey's contribution to the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch helps reveal trends

A record-breaking 15,630 people in Surrey took part in this year's Big Garden Bird Watch.

Small-bodied birds like the Long-tailed Tit, the Coal Tit and the Goldcrest were the worst affected by the harsh winter of 2009/2010, but their numbers were up this year in Surrey and across the UK. This year the top three birds seen in gardens in Surrey were Blue Tits with an average of 4.1 per garden, Woodpigeons with 2.5 per garden and Blackbirds with 2.4 per garden. Thousands of people across the UK were also lucky enough to see Waxwings. Last year, these bold, beautiful birds were right at the bottom of the list of sightings in Surrey, but this year they ranked number 47, out of a total of 69 species. Waxwings feed on berries and visit the UK erratically, usually when there's a lack of food in Scandinavia. They would only come into gardens if their food was available, so the results show that lots of people in Surrey are planting the right things for wildlife, and reaping the rewards.

The Big Garden Birdwatch is the biggest wildlife survey in the world and provides the RSPB with a fantastic snapshot of how garden birds are faring. Nationally 609,177 people counted over 10.2 million birds. Over 70 species were recorded in 300,780 gardens across the UK over the weekend of 29th and 30th January.

The House Sparrow retained its top spot for the eighth year running with an average of four seen per garden, and has increased by 10 per cent. Starlings and Blackbirds have swapped positions on this year's leader board, with Starlings now at number two and Blackbirds at number 3. Starling sightings have increased by a quarter since last year, but their numbers are still down from when Big Garden Birdwatch began in 1979. Numbers of Blue Tits increased by 22 per cent and Great Tits by 12 per cent.

To find out how to make their gardens more wildlife friendly, people can go to the RSPB's *Homes for Wildlife* site:

www.rspb.org.uk/hfw

Surrey Big Garden Birdwatch results (top ten birds in 2010 and 2011):

Rank	2010	Average per garden	2011	Average per garden
1	Blue_Tit	3.39	Blue Tit	4.1
2	Woodpigeon	2.74	Woodpigeon	2.5
3	Blackbird	2.54	Blackbird	2.4
4	House_Sparrow	1.99	House Sparrow	2.2
5	Starling	1.71	Starling	2.0
6	Robin	1.67	Great Tit	1.8
7	Great_Tit	1.65	Robin	1.5
8	Chaffinch	1.46	Chaffinch	1.4
9	Magpie	1.29	Magpie	1.3
10	Collared_Dove	1.17	Goldfinch	1.2
No of people	13888		15630	