

## Dads' Activities Pack

# Bird spotting

How many fathers are able to tell their children what birds they are seeing in the park or in their garden? Spending some time with a good identification sheet will enable dads and children to learn together about the birds in their area. We also suggest activities which allow fathers and children to work together to make life easier for birds, by providing them with food and shelter.

### Activity 1: The Big Bird Watch

#### What is it?

In January every year thousands of people spend an hour at the weekend looking at the birds in their garden and recording how many they see of different types. Then they send the results in to a national survey run by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The survey is a great chance for fathers and their children to work together to take part in a national event.

Of course, this only happens once a year but, if you use the RSPB identification sheet you can do it at any time of year, and in any location, in gardens, parks, by the canal, or out of the window of a children's centre.

#### What is so good about it?

- It's a chance to learn about the birds in your area
- It allows fathers and children to learn about them in a fun way
- It's a great way for adults and children to co-operate and get to know each other – and make new friends
- Participants learn new skills which can be used independently, and learn about the natural world.
- Learning about the natural world.

#### Who is it for?

Men accompanied by 1-2 children (either gender). It can be open to women with children too if you prefer. There's no maximum number but if the group is too big the facilitator will find it hard to engage everyone at the same level.



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## What skills and resources are needed?

Minimal resources are required. You will need....

- Information to help you identify birds, for example RSPB identification sheets (see next page)
- A green space of some kind
- An internet connection (if you want to log your results at the RSPB).

## How to publicise it?

As part of the national bird watch event (if you are doing it in the last weekend of January), or as a bird safari at any other time of year.

## Detailed description of activity

Arrange to meet in an appropriate place. It could be a local park, the garden around a children's centre, a school grounds (if they agree). Anywhere that has trees, bushes, open space where birds can be seen. Ask dads to work in groups of two with their children to stand or sit for an hour (half an hour if children are young perhaps) and see how many birds they can spot and identify on the RSPB sheet.

If the maximum number of each bird you see at the same time is one, mark off one on the sheet. If you see two together mark off two. The idea is to record the highest number of each type of bird seen at the same time.

## Top tips

1.

If you are doing this as part of the annual bird watch in January, you can log your results onto the survey website, at [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)



2.

Children and adults should be actively involved – the best way to learn new skills and knowledge.

3.

A book about British birds will give you a chance to talk more about the different types of birds you are seeing.



4.

While clearing up, talk about what you will all want to do next – and who will organise it! Involve the children in this discussion.





**PLEASE DON'T SEND US THIS SHEET!**

Use this sheet to help with your birdwatch. Then visit our website at [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch) to submit your results. Please don't send this sheet to the RSPB – it will cost us money and we won't be able to count your results. Just pop this sheet in the recycling. Thank you.

**How to use this sheet**

1. Record the highest number of each species you saw **at any one time** during your birdwatch (see example for instructions).
2. If you see species not listed on this sheet, record them on another sheet of paper.
3. Submit your results at [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch) – thanks for taking part.

**Example**

If you see two blue tits at the same time, colour one and two.



If you then see four blue tits together, colour up to box four, not six.



If later you see three blue tits, stay at four. Do not go up to seven.




**Blackbird**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Collared dove**




1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Greenfinch**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Robin**




1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Blue tit**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Dunnock**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**House sparrow**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Song thrush**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Carrion crow**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Feral pigeon**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Jackdaw**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Starling**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Chaffinch**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Goldfinch**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Long-tailed tit**




1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Woodpigeon**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Coal tit**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Great tit**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Magpie**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

**Wren**



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

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## Activity 2: Make an apple birdfeeder

### What is it?

This is a really simple and fun activity for dads and children to work on together – either as a standalone activity or perhaps as part of a bigger 'nature day' and/or alongside the bird watching activity outlined above. The aim is to make a bird feeder that should attract lots of different seed-eating birds to your site.

### What resources are needed?

- Apples
- An apple corer
- Sunflower seeds
- 3 sticks per apple
- String

### How it works

Ask fathers and their children to meet in an appropriate place. It could be at a children's centre or some other community building; in your local park; or some other outdoor space. Once there you could set fathers and children off to buy the relevant resources and find sticks – or have them ready beforehand.

### Demonstrate what you need to do:

- Remove the apple core from the apple with the corer
- Push the sunflower seeds into the top half of the apple for the birds to eat
- Make bird perches by pushing one stick into either side of the apple, but near the bottom
- You should have one of your three sticks left. Tie the string around the last stick and thread the string through the core of the apple
- The apple should sit on the stick and you will be able to tie the apple to the branch of a tree, or whatever else seems suitable.
- Once you have demonstrated this, fathers can do the same with their children and soon the area will be full of hanging apples.
- Then – sit back to watch who comes to eat the seeds, and see if you can identify them from your bird chart and/or books.



### Useful links

The RSPB Annual birdwatch website  
[www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)

Other ways of making an apple bird feeder  
[www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growyourrown/Activities/A30.pdf](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growyourrown/Activities/A30.pdf)

Make a bird nesting box  
[www.lincstrust.org.uk/factsheets/nestbox.php](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/factsheets/nestbox.php)

Make a bird nesting box  
[www.garden-birds.co.uk/home.shtml](http://www.garden-birds.co.uk/home.shtml)

Wherever you live in the UK, there will be a local Wildlife Trust. The website has lots of great resources, and membership buys you access to lots of wildlife opportunities for families of any size.  
[www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=helping:membership](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=helping:membership)

### Useful books

#### The Garden Bird Book

By S. Whittley

New Holland Publishers Ltd; ISBN 1845374967; 2006

#### Birdfeeder Garden

By R. Burton

Dorling Kindersley; ISBN 0751304409; 1998

#### The Secret Lives of Garden Birds

By D. Couzens

Helm; ISBN 0713666161; 2004

#### The Ultimate Birdfeeder Handbook

By J. Burton & S. Young

New Holland Publishers; ISBN 1843309564; 2005

#### The BTO Nestbox Guide

By J. Burton & S. Young

BTO; ISBN 1902576810; 2003