

Winter Wildlife Spotter

Take a look around when you're out and about this winter and see what wildlife you can spot.



Fox



Grey Squirrel



Mallard Duck



Robin



Jay



Woodpigeon



Chaffinch



Mute Swan



Starling



Robin

This songbird sings its lovely song throughout the winter months, to say to other robins 'this is my territory'. Both males and females have a red breast, and both will sing in winter. You can support robins in your green space by putting out mealworms for them to eat.

Starling

In winter, starlings often fly in large groups at dusk, creating wonderful patterns in the sky. These are called murmurations. Get a closer look at a starling and you will see its grey feathers shimmer with shades of green and purple too.

Fox

Foxes are part of the dog family, and you might hear a male fox bark or the scream of a female. Your best chance to see a fox is at dusk. They survive well in cities as well as the countryside, scavenging for food wherever they can.

Grey Squirrel

These bushy-tailed mammals are very common in the UK, but you might not see so much of them in the winter. They don't hibernate, but do tend to sleep a lot more in the winter. During autumn you may have seen squirrels collecting nuts and hiding them in different spots. This is called caching, and means they have access to food over the winter.

Woodpigeon

This is the biggest and most common type of pigeon in the UK. You can often hear its call (coo cooo cooo), and the clatter of its wings as it takes off. In winter, our own woodpigeons are joined by more flying south from northern Europe.

Jay

Jays are the most colourful members of the crow family. During the winter they are likely to come into gardens, particularly if you are putting out food on a bird table. Like squirrels, they will cache acorns so that they have food when the weather gets cold.

Mallard

A wildlife spot if you are near a river or lake, mallards are common and easy to identify. The male (or drake) has a shiny green head, while the female is brown and mottled. They can be quite tame, and come to you if you feed them. But don't feed them bread - go for sweetcorn, oats or seeds instead. They even like a bit of torn up lettuce.

Mute Swan

Another one to spot by a river or lake, the mute swan is large, white and graceful on the water. They are not as noisy as other types of swan, but mute swans are not actually mute. They can be heard making grunting and hissing sounds. Mute swans live in the UK all year round, but in winter you may see Bewick and Whooper swans as well.

Chaffinch

Chaffinches like gardens, particularly if you put food out for them. There are more chaffinches in the UK over winter than at other times of year as they are joined by birds flying south from northern Europe to escape the extreme cold of winter there. The males are easy to recognise with their pink chest and blue head. The female is brown, but has a white bar on the wings.