

20 AMAZING GARDEN BIRD FACTS

1. Blue tits and great tits closely link their breeding with the emergence of caterpillars - great food for growing chicks. Parent birds deliver more than 10,000 to their young
2. A pair of great tits will each fly at least 100 km to collect the caterpillars and carry almost their own body weight in a day
3. Migrating swallows cover 200 miles a day, mainly during daylight, at speeds of 17-22 mph 
4. A pair of robins weigh roughly the same as one size 4 chicken egg
5. Not all birds are expert nest builders - sometimes collared doves find their chicks fall through their flimsy nests
6. A group of sparrows is called a host or a tribe 
7. Starlings often roost in massive numbers - some city hot spots can contain over a million birds
8. Robins and wrens share a reputation for nesting in strange places - sheds, greenhouses, hanging baskets - even a pocket in washing left on the line
9. Male and female blackbirds tend to separate for the winter, but when the breeding season arrives, they often return to previous season's partner, year after year
10. In winter, tiny birds like wrens sleep together at night for warmth. An incredible 63 wrens were once found in a single nest box 
11. A blue tit weighs the same as a euro coin 
12. The robin is one of the few UK birds to sing all year round. It's one of the earliest birds to start the dawn chorus and one of the last to stop singing at night - it can easily be triggered into full song in the middle of the night
13. Starlings are outstanding mimics and incorporate accurate copies of sounds of other birds, frogs and mammals, and even mechanical sounds, into their song
14. Almost 9 million birds were counted as part of the 2004 RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch - that's more than the combined human population of Scotland and Wales!
15. House martins fly all the way to tropical Africa for the winter, yet find their way back to exactly the same nest the following spring 
16. Coal tits hide food - they take sunflower seeds and peanuts for a winter store
17. Robins sometimes feed the chicks of other birds - they can't resist a hungry chick
18. Blue tits used to open milk bottle tops to drink the cream. They stopping when semi-skimmed milk became popular
19. Swifts gather flying insects to feed their young. Each food ball contains between 300 and 1,000 insects.
20. Blackbirds love to sunbathe - they can often be seen on the ground with their wings spread 