

A year in the life of...
the Song Thrush

- January Holly and ivy become important food sources.
- February Males begin singing to attract mates.
- March Nesting may begin if the weather is mild.
- April Most first clutches are laid.
- May Many pairs are on their second brood.
- June Some pairs may nest for a third time.
- July Young become independent and disperse.
- August Most nesting is finished. Adults begin a full moult to replace worn feathers.
- September Adults still moulting. Juveniles lose their spotted plumage.
- October Adults claim feeding territories.
- November Migrant thrushes arrive.
- December Bird food helps thrushes to survive during prolonged cold spells.



A tangle of garden trees and shrubs is ideal for song thrushes, especially if the trees bear fruit!

Biodiversity Action Plan

This song thrush leaflet is one of the initiatives from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Biodiversity Partnership, which promotes the importance of conserving our species and habitats. Cambridgeshire local authorities, Peterborough City Council, English Nature, the Environment Agency, RSPB, the Wildlife Trust and Anglian Water are all members of this partnership. Biodiversity is described as 'the WOW factor – the Wealth of Wildlife that surrounds us'.

The Biodiversity Partnership is implementing Biodiversity Action Plans for key species and habitats. These plans include actions that a number of organisations have agreed to carry out to conserve our wildlife. The plan for the Song Thrush will focus everyone's attention on actions that will help the Song Thrush to thrive in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
www.camcnty.gov.uk/sub/cntryside/biodiv/index.html

Leaflets: all are free, but please send an SAE

- Gardening for wildlife leaflet
- Great Crested Newt leaflet
- Discovering Cambridgeshire's Hedgerows

Order Form

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Please return this Order Form to:
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 Tel. 01223 712410; Fax. 01223 712412 or
 Rachel Price, The Wildlife Trust
 Environment and Energy Centre, 33a Westgate
 Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 1PU
 Tel. 01733 890419

Produced jointly by Cambridge Green Belt Project and The Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity partners.

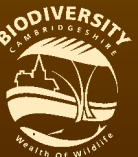
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The Song Thrush



The decline of a common song bird – and how you can help it recover.



The magnificent and far-carrying song of the song thrush can still be regularly heard in our parks, gardens and woodlands. Often confused with the mistle thrush (but see below), this frequent yet timid garden visitor is perhaps best known for its habit of using stones to crack open snail shells.

Since the early 1970s the song thrush has declined by over 70% on farmland and 50% in woodlands. The reasons for this decline are poorly understood but may relate to:

- loss of hedges and wooded habitats on farms;
- the switch from spring to autumn sown cereals;
- use of slug pellets and other pesticides on farms and in gardens, depriving the song thrush of snails and slugs when the ground is too hard to seek out worms.

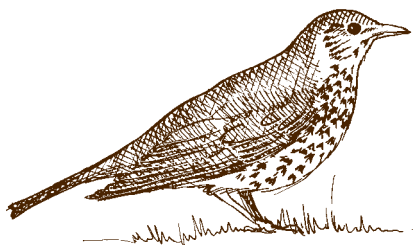
Recent studies in Essex have shown the importance of gardens and allotment habitats for the song thrush. Over 70% of song thrush territories were found in gardens, although this habitat only accounted for 2% of the study area.

The Song Thrush...



is smaller and browner than the Mistle Thrush. The speckles on its throat and breast are arranged in streaks, and the underside of its wing is pale orange.

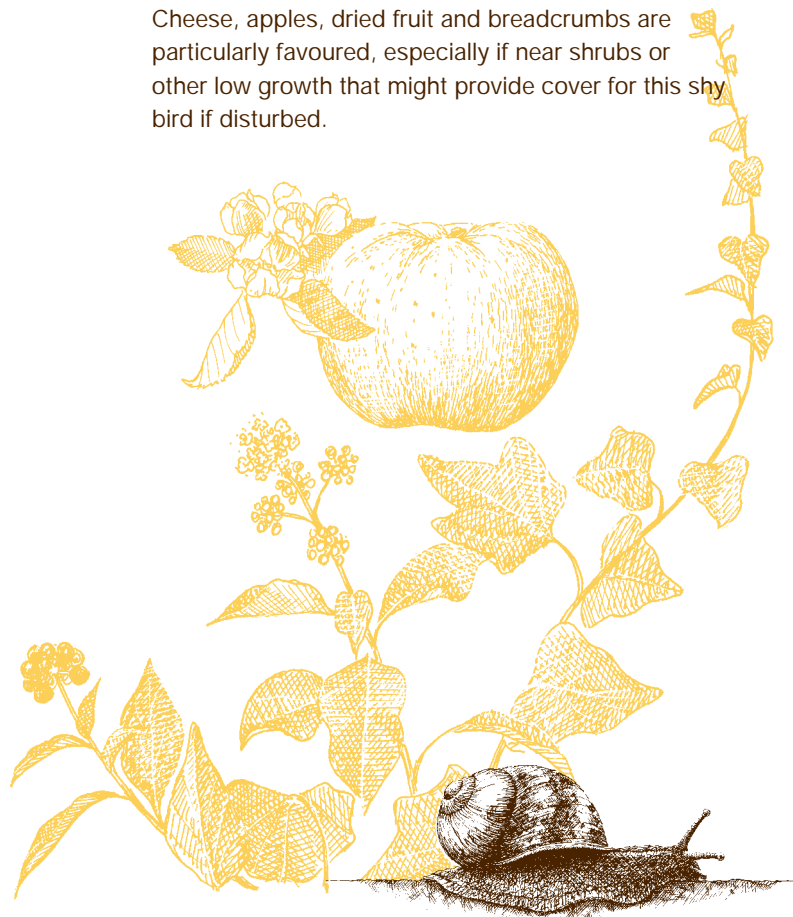
The Mistle Thrush...



is a much larger, greyish bird. The speckles on its throat and breast become rounder towards the belly, and the underside of its wing is pale yellow-grey.

What can you do to help the Song Thrush?

- Stop the use of slug pellets in your garden or allotment. Provide some low shrub growth to encourage birds, hedgehogs or frogs which will help control slugs and snails, as well as other garden pests. It also makes the gardening more pleasurable!
- Grow, or allow to fruit, shrubs such as holly, ivy, blackthorn and hawthorn. These provide an important late season food source to help sustain the song thrush through winter.
- Remember to put out food for birds in winter on the ground as well as on the bird table, to allow for ground feeding species such as song thrush. Cheese, apples, dried fruit and breadcrumbs are particularly favoured, especially if near shrubs or other low growth that might provide cover for this shy bird if disturbed.



What are local authorities and other organisations doing?

- Song thrushes, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act.
- Local survey work is helping to inform local planning authorities and other organisations on breeding sites for the song thrush.
- The Wildlife Trust, RSPB and others are encouraging farmers and landowners to take up more sympathetic management of hedgerows, thickets and farm woodlands, as well as to reduce their usage of pesticides and to consider mixed farming. These measures will help many other forms of wildlife in addition to the song thrush.
- Nationally, research is being carried out by the RSPB into the impact of different farming methods, including the effects of food availability on breeding success. The results will have important applications in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

