

Song Thrush factfile



This factfile intends to provide the background information necessary for teachers to use the lesson plans and worksheets confidently. A number of other websites that may be useful include Wikipedia, ARKive, BBC Nature, Naturenet, RSPB and The Wildlife Trust.

Song Thrush

Latin: *Turdus philomelos*

The Song thrush is a familiar and popular garden songbird whose numbers are declining seriously, making it a Red list species. Song thrushes are smaller, and browner than the Mistle thrush. The song thrush has a distinctive song, with repeating musical phrases. It builds a neat mud-lined cup nest in a bush or tree, and then lays four or five dark-spotted blue eggs. The female incubates the eggs alone for between 10 and 17 days, the chicks fledge after a similar time again. They will attempt to raise two or three broods a year.

They utilise habitats which include bushes and trees such as woods, hedgerows, parks and gardens across the UK.

Song thrushes are preyed on by cats and birds of prey, whilst they feed on worms, fruit and snails; smashing them against stones to break the shell.

Intensive farming practices, have been blamed for a serious and rapid decline in populations. The introduction of pesticides, and the removal of field boundaries such as hedgerows have decreased the availability of both food and shelter for the song thrush and many other species. Farms in the past tended to contain a number of different habitat types including, ponds, woodland areas, crops and open fields supporting a variety of flowering plants. These days, they typically either farm livestock or crop, whilst features such as hedgerows, old stone walls and ponds have been removed. Fields have been ploughed and reseeded with a single or low number of high-yield grass species, removing the diversity of plant species found, and therefore the invertebrate species that inhabit them.

They are also at risk from poisoning due to the increased use of pesticides – particularly slug and snail baits used in gardens. They may also be killed on roads when they use the hard surface to smash snails.



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