With their bright red breast and face, robins are easy to spot, despite being only around 13cm long. You will often hear them singing into the evening with their high ‘tic tic tic’ song.

Robins can be seen in gardens throughout cities, towns and villages. They will nest almost anywhere, including inside old watering cans or sheds, in a cup-shaped nest made mainly from moss. They will lay 4-6 eggs (white with sandy or red freckles) between May and July.

Their usual diet includes:
- insects and their larvae;
- spiders;
- worms;
- weeds;
- seeds;
- fruit;
- berries;
- nuts.

Blackbird

Male blackbirds are usually jet-black with an orange beak, whereas females are dark brown with a brown beak. They are larger than robins, at around 25cm long, but can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song.

Blackbirds are found in a wide variety of habitats, including woodland, fields, gardens, towns, cities and countryside. Originally, blackbirds were woodland birds; still usually found nesting in bushes, shrubs or trees. They use grass, horsehair and fine roots held together with mud to form their nests, which are usually lined with grass, and lay their bluish green eggs in them.

Blackbirds mostly eat insects but have been known to have a very varied diet, including nuts, berries, cheese, fruit, newts and shrews – one of the reasons they thrive in the wild. Blackbirds are also able to catch worms if the grass is soft enough for them to dig with their beaks.
Threats to Garden Birds and How You Can Help

There are things that we use in our gardens which could harm garden birds, such as:

**Netting** – People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their vegetables, but birds can become tangled in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of natural material.

**Outside lights** – Outside lights can confuse birds causing them to collide with windows as they use the light to navigate. If you have outside lights, put them on a timer so they do not stay on at night.

**Artificial Grass** – Artificial turf destroys habitats for birds and the insects they eat so it is best to use natural grass wherever possible.

Did You Know…?

Although it is so small, the wren has the loudest song of our native birds; they can be heard making a loud “teck teck teck” call ending in a trill.

Did You Know…?

Although they are not always resident in the UK, nightingales are special summer visitors to parts of southern England. They are very secretive and hard to spot but their melodic song can be heard through the day and night. They are some of the loudest, fastest singers of the bird world!

**Wren**

**Latin Name:** Troglodytes troglodytes

Despite their miniscule size, at only 9-10cm long and weighing 8-13g (the same weight as a £1 coin), wrens are not actually Britain’s smallest native bird – a title held by the goldcrest, at just 9cm long and 6g in weight. However, wrens are Britain’s most common native bird. To spot an adult wren, look out for brown plumage and a short tail which constantly flicks.

Wrens are good at hiding in amongst trees and bushes, where they build their nests from grass, moss and leaves and line them with feathers. Within these nests, adult wrens will lay 5-8 white eggs with brown speckles. When born, young wrens are almost identical to their parents except that they don’t have prominent pale eyebrows. Wrens have a varied diet but mainly choose to feed on insects and spiders.
Glossary

**artificial**: Something made by humans; not natural.

**native**: Born in a particular place.

**navigate**: To find its way.

**plumage**: A bird’s feathers.

**resident**: Living somewhere permanently.

**trill**: A quavering sound.

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**Springwatch Wild Academy Challenge!**

Make sure you have watched the Springwatch Wild Academy show on *Garden Birds* before you try and answer these challenge questions:

1. Name a bird that sings at night.
2. In which month does this bird usually return to the UK?
Questions

1. How long are blackbirds? Tick one.
   - 9 cm
   - 9-10 cm
   - 13 cm
   - 25 cm

2. Match the bird to their eggs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Eggs Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>robin</td>
<td>bluish green eggs, spotted with brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wren</td>
<td>white with sandy or red freckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blackbird</td>
<td>white with brown speckles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Name two habitats that blackbirds can be found in.
   - 
   - 

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:
   People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their __________, but birds can become __________ in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of __________.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows that nightingales do not live permanently within the UK.

   ________________________________

6. Summarise the information about nightingales in 30 words or less.

   ________________________________
7. Why do you think that robins can become so tame that they feed out of people’s hands?

8. Why do you think that nightingales are described as a ‘special summer visitor’?

9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.
1. How long are blackbirds? Tick one.
   - 9cm
   - 9-10cm
   - 13cm
   - 25cm
   ☑ 25cm

2. Match the bird to their eggs.

   - robin: bluish green eggs, spotted with brown
   - wren: white with sandy or red freckles
   - blackbird: white with brown speckles

3. Name two habitats that blackbirds can be found in.
   Accept any two of the following: fields; gardens; towns; cities; countryside.

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:
   People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their vegetables, but birds can become tangled in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of natural materials.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows that nightingales do not live permanently within the UK.
   (they are) not always resident (in the UK)

6. Summarise the information about nightingales in 30 words or less.
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: Nightingales are special summer visitors to southern England that are secretive and hard to spot but their loud, fast song can be heard day and night.

7. Why do you think that robins can become so tame that they feed out of people’s hands?
   Pupils’ own responses, such as: Because robins live in areas such as towns and cities, they are used to humans being around and, if humans feed them regularly, they will begin to trust them enough to feed directly out of their hands.
8. Why do you think that nightingales are described as a ‘special summer visitor’?
   *Pupils’ own responses, such as: Nightingales visit the UK during the summer months and people think they are special because of their beautiful and rare song.*

9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.
   *Pupils’ own responses, such as: The author has included a glossary to explain the meanings of some of the more tricky words.*
   natural: Not made by humans; from nature.