

Country Notes for February 2021

One of the most useful things that we can do to help the wildlife in our gardens at this time of the year is to keep our bird tables stocked with food, and especially high energy foods such as peanuts. Yesterday I was treated to the sight of two long tailed tits queuing up to feed at the peanut feeder in my garden and what a wonderful sight they were with their wonderful black, white and pink plumage and long tail feathers. I felt that I was more than repaid for feeding them, just by the fact that they were there!

Long tailed tits are one of the birds whose habits have changed recently in order to aid their survival. At one time it would have been very rare to see one anywhere near a bird table, but in recent times they have become frequent visitors to most well stocked bird tables. Surely this must be an example of evolution in progress; birds adapting in order to make the most of what is on offer.

The other bird species which has done the same thing is the goldfinch. These wonderful birds have not only begun to frequent bird tables but have also become much more common. Very possibly this is the result of their ability to adapt to changing conditions. These birds are also very easy to identify, with their black, brown and white plumage being highlighted by bright yellow on their wings and a strong red patch on their faces. They also make a wonderful tinkling call as they fly, usually in groups.

In addition to the bird table, a bird bath will also be of great benefit to the birds, not only to provide them with somewhere to drink but also somewhere to bathe. Keeping their feathers in tip top condition at this time of year is vital to their survival in cold weather.

If you do not already have a bird table or bird bath, I urge you to do so. It won't just be the birds who benefit!

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