

Some common birds of Fletcher Moss



The **Robin** is seen just about everywhere in lowland Britain, and is a real favourite of our parks and gardens. They are probably the least shy of any common bird and will often come very near to you if they think you are doing something (eg gardening) which will unearth a nice juicy worm. In addition to their cheerful plumage they have a lovely melodious song. You can't fail to come across a robin in the garden areas of Fletcher Moss.



Blue Tits are another very common 'resident' bird which can be seen everywhere, particularly if you have feeders in your garden. As well as seeds and nuts from garden feeders, blue tits feed on insects and spiders in the summer, and berries and nuts in the autumn and winter. They mostly rely on just one brood of some 7—13 eggs, and if this fails they have to wait until the following year to try again. You can't fail to see and hear the many blue tits in our gardens.



The common **House Sparrow** is a cheerful and noisy resident of our parks, gardens and hedgerows. Sparrows are extremely sociable and you will find them in small flocks, often occupying a section of thick hedge (eg Hawthorn or Privet); they even nest together in small colonies. They have a very varied diet, which includes plant seeds, household scraps, peanuts from bird feeders, and food from rubbish. Their young are fed on invertebrates like caterpillars.



The **Blackbird** is one of the commonest British birds and can be seen everywhere in parks and gardens. It feeds on worms and ground insects, and in the autumn on berries. One of the real sounds of summer is the beautifully melodious warbling song of the male blackbird. You would find it hard to miss seeing a blackbird on a walk around Fletcher Moss or Parsonage Gardens. The females are more brown than black and have a less bright beak than the male.



Among our great bird sounds is that of the **Song Thrush**, which you can hear in the spring and summer in most areas of Fletcher Moss and the Parsonage, and particularly in Stenner Woods. Listen out for the very musical song of short phrases, each of which is repeated 3—5 times. The thrush is a close relation of the blackbird, and similar in its feeding and breeding habits, but it is much lighter in colour and has a very speckled breast.



The **Great Tit** is slightly larger than its relative, the Blue Tit (above), with a black cap, collar and throat, and a black line running down its yellow breast. It feeds on insects such as caterpillars in summer, and fruit, seeds and nuts in autumn and winter. It lays 5-12 eggs in its first brood and is more likely than the Blue Tit to have a second brood if the first fails. It is a resident bird which can be seen in all areas of Fletcher Moss throughout the year.



The **Greater Spotted Woodpecker** (juvenile male shown here) is sometimes hard to see, but you can hear its high-pitched 'kick-kick' call throughout the year, and in late winter and spring you are likely to hear its characteristic 'drumming' sound on the branches of trees in our woodland areas. The woodpecker has an enormously long tongue which it uses to reach into the nest chambers of tree insects. It nests in holes which it excavates in tree trunks or large branches.



A bird which is often missed because it goes about its daily life in a quiet and unobtrusive way is the **Dunnock**, another common resident in our area. It is often confused with the house sparrow, and in the past was known as a 'Hedge-sparrow', but its colour pattern, and in particular its beak, is quite different. It spends most of its life hopping around on the ground feeding on beetles, snails, spiders, flies and worms.