

## **BRIEF NOTES ON BIRD SONGS AND CALLS — common passerines**

### **1: BLACKBIRD**

Song: well-known for its mellow melodic tone- clear, loud and fluting. Tempo quite slow with a distinct twitter toward the end.

Calls: lots: hard clacking “chack-ack-ack-ack”; Robin-like “tsiih”; distinctive alarm-metallic, high “pli-pli-pli-pli-” which often ends in a crescendo as the bird flies off.

### **2: BLACKCAP**

Song: begins as a chattering warble, breaking out into louder clearer flute-like notes.

Calls: distinctive tongue-clicking “Teck” often repeated excitedly.

### **3 BLUE TIT**

Song: quite variable but commonest and most distinctive is a bright and enthusiastic song consisting of a series of sharp notes followed by a trill.

Sounds like: “P.P.P.P. Diddy P. Diddy Diddy Diddy”.

Calls: lots, but “churr-it-it” is distinctive.

### **4: CHAFFINCH**

Song: tumbling or descending cascade of notes ending in a slightly wheezy flourish. Quite loud and rattling.

Calls: distinctive “Fink” or “Pink” - similar to Great Tit’s “ping”.

### **5: CHIFFCHAFF**

Song: repeated Chiff-Chaff, chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff-chiff.

Calls: high pitched, thin “Hweet” often repeated.

### **6: COLLARD DOVE**

Song: a trisyllabic Coo with the second stressed and the third lower (“coo-Cooo-coo” or “Doo-doooo-do”). Cuckoo-like at a distance.

Calls: a nasally “krreair” on landing.

### **7: DUNNOCK**

Song: sweet high-pitched twiddling melody given in short verses. Often sing from a prominent perch.

Calls: alarm call a distinctive, strong `pipe` with a discordant tone – “Tiuh”.

### **8 GARDEN WARBLER**

Song: like Blackcap but with longer verses and slightly lower pitch. A chattering warble that flows up and down (like a babbling brook) without reaching the clear flute-like finale of the Blackcap.

#### **9: GOLDCREST**

Song: a cyclic repetition (4-6 times) of a thin high pitched, rhythmic “piteetilu” with a little rapid trill or flourish at the end.

Calls: thin high-pitched, reedy “zree-zree-zree”.

#### **10: GOLDFINCH**

Song: rather quiet of rapid trills, mewing and twittering notes- but *always recognisable by interwoven call note*- a tri-syllabic “tick-e-litt”.

#### **11 GREAT TIT**

Song: many and varied songs but the commonest consists of two notes “Teacher-Teacher”, “Too-ee- Too-ee” etc

Calls: many and varied including a chaffinch like ‘Ping-Ping’, scolds and harsh notes.

#### **12: GREENFINCH**

Song: two types of songs often woven together: a wheezy, nasal “Duhz-whee” and a beautiful twittering liquid trill. Watch out for song flight when male flitters around in circles in a bat-like flight.

Calls: “Jupp” and trill like “Jupp-up-up”.

#### **13: LESSER WHITETHROAT**

Song: contains a distinctive, rapid, sweet rattle delivered from thick shrubbery. Birds very difficult to see.

Call: a clicky “Tack”.

#### **14: LONG-TAILED TIT**

Song: soft twittering, seldom heard.

Calls: quite loud trisyllabic, sharp “srih-srih-srih” and slightly explosive rippling calls “zerrrr”. Chatty clicking calls-“pt” (or “zepp”).

#### **15: MISTLE THRUSH**

Song: most like Blackbird’s -short, varied verses with clear and loud voice but sounds more desolate and slightly harder in tone. Sounds more monotonous and with few of no squeaky notes at the end of the phrases.

Call: a characteristic drawn-out dry, angry-sounding rattle.

#### **16: ROBIN**

Song: a number of high-pitched, drawn-out notes which quickly descend in pitch but increase in speed. Does not repeat: the “verses” progress but are never the same. There are pauses between verses and the faster ones include sections of soft trembling and squeaky notes. Described as being wistful, but “perky”.

Calls: a dry, elastic “Tic” often repeated when agitated. Alarm: a thin high-pitched “Tsee” uttered in response to especially aerial predators. Hard to locate where the bird is as though it is being a ventriloquist!

**17: SONG THRUSH**

Song: loud, clear verses/phrases **repeated 2-4 times**. Strongly varied often with squeaky and shrill cascades of notes.

Call: a sharp "Zit" - not so harsh and clicking as the Robin's "tic".

**18: WHITETHROAT**

Song: distinctively scratchy and jerky song with short hurried chattery phrases.

Calls: a distinctive hoarse nasally sound.

**19: WOODPIGEON**

Song: a 5-syllable hollow cooing with the first emphasized and a longer pause before the fifth-  
"**dooh**-doo ,daaw-daaw...do".

Calls: a hollow, hoarse growling "sigh"- "hooh-hrooo....."

**20: WREN**

Song: very loud, bursting and far-carrying... a high-pitched series of sweet whistles with a *rolling rattle* towards the end.

Calls: when disturbed or nervous utters a hard "Zerrr" with a single, hard, clicking "Zeck", often repeated in agitation.