Were banned that the population began to recover. BTO studies have monitored the recovery, southern and eastern England. This came in the form of organochlorine pesticides, introduced
Sparrowhawk nearly exterminated from large parts of its former range, notably across
Viewed as a threat by game-rearing interests, the Sparrowhawk has been persecuted
recovered most of the ground lost as a result of earlier persecution and
southern England. This is because Sparrowhawks do not respond to their own feeding
The Sparrowhawk is a predator of small birds, and because of this, some people have had
Sparrowhawks rely on the element of surprise to gain an advantage over the small birds on which they prey. In such a situation, they may work across a range of land-uses, avoiding
If the available evidence suggests that Sparrowhawks have not had any long-term effects on
between Sparrowhawks and their prey. None of these studies has found any evidence that
Disease for more information). An important point to note is that it is not uncommon for birds to become pre-
**Join Garden BirdWatch today for just £15 and get the acclaimed “Gardening for Birdwatchers’ Free!**

Gardens are great places in which to find out more about birds and their behaviour, making garden birdwatching a very pleasurable pastime. For example, did you know that some of your wintering Blackbirds will have come from Poland, Germany and even Russia!

The British Trust for Ornithology monitors the changing fortunes of those birds that use our gardens through the BTO Garden BirdWatch. The project involves more than 16,000 garden birdwatchers, all collecting simple information on the birds using their gardens throughout the year. This information also enables us to find out how birds use different types of gardens and how this use varies across Britain and Ireland.

**Garden BirdWatch is the largest year-round study of garden birds (and other garden wildlife) anywhere in the World. Membership of Garden BirdWatch costs just £15 a year.*

Being a member of Garden BirdWatch offers you:

- **A quarterly magazine on garden birds.**
- **Access to expert advice to help you identify and look after the birds in your garden.**
- **The opportunity to participate in an important national project and to contribute valuable information that can be used to help conserve the birds of Britain and Ireland.**
- **The chance to find out more about the different birds that visit your garden.**
- **The potential to be part of a national project that contributes valuable data to conservation projects.**
- **The chance to be part of a community of garden birdwatchers and professional ornithologists, all keen to understand what is happening to birds within the United Kingdom. By supporting the Trust financially and by contributing to national surveys, members provide valuable information on Britain’s birds and their habitats; research that forms a basis for sound conservation. Thousands of BTO members and other volunteer birdwatchers are involved in the monitoring work, coordinated by local organisations and scientific liaison officers in North and South to learn more please visit the BTO website at www.bto.org.**

*For more please visit the BTO website at www.bto.org, write to BTO, Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, telephone 01842–750050 or email info@bto.org. Registered Charity No. 216652.

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**Identifying Sparrowhawks**

The Sparrowhawk is by far the most common bird of prey to be encountered within the garden environment. The two potential confusion species, Goshawk and Merlin, are actually very non-equivalent species. Goshawk and Merlins are only rarely encountered visiting gardens and can usually be discounted on this basis alone.

**General appearance:** A small, broad-winged raptor, showing a long tail and appearing small-headed. The upperparts are dark (sometimes with white patches present – see below) and the underparts finely barred. When perched, note the long, thin yellow legs.

**Adult male:** Smaller (wing-span up to 65cm). Has slate-grey upperparts and white/off-white undertails. The underparts show russet barring, which varies in intensity from person to person. Individuals. Some individuals are evenly barred while others are almost completely russet on the chest, throat and flanks.

**Adult female:** Larger (wing-span up to 77cm). Has brownish-grey upperparts with off-white undertails with barring that is less russet in tone. The russet colouration seen in males is usually much reduced in females. The white supercilium (the line above the eye) is more prominent in females than in males and a white patch is often evident at the back of the crown.

**Juvenile:** Young birds have dark brown upperparts and the barring on the fluty white underparts is coarser than seen in adults – sometimes appearing more like spots towards the top of the chest.

**Eye colour:** In Sparrowhawk, the iris colour changes with age. Brownish-black at hatching, the iris becomes pale lemon-yellow within a couple of months. As the birds age, the iris goes from yellow to orange and, in some adult males, wine red.

**Prey remains:** Sparrowhawks pluck the breast feathers from their prey, usually preferring to do this in cover or at a favoured feeding station. However, you may find that they begin the process of plucking close to the site of the kill. This means that you may sometimes find prey remains or a scatter of feathers in your garden. To check if these remains are the result of Sparrowhawk activity (as opposed to a Cat or a Fox), look at the shafts of the larger feathers. Those plucked by a Sparrowhawk will have a split along the shaft (before the hawk’s beak has finished with it). Cats and Foxes bite off the feathers so the result of Sparrowhawk activity (as opposed to a Cat or a Fox), look at the shafts of the larger feathers. Those plucked by a Sparrowhawk will have a split along the shaft (before the hawk’s beak has finished with it). Cats and Foxes bite off the feathers so the shaft will be incomplete, with a broken end.

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**About the BTO – making your birdwatching count**

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