

Bird Atlas 2007-2011

What is the Bird Atlas?

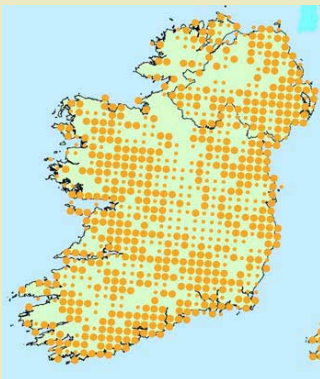
The Bird Atlas is a project to map all of Ireland and Britain's birds during both the winter and the breeding season. The Bird Atlas 2007-2011 is the biggest survey of birds ever to have taken place across the country and hopefully your school will join this exciting and rewarding work.

The project is a working partnership between BirdWatch Ireland, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Scottish Ornithologist's Club. The information collected from the survey will allow them to see changes in bird distributions. They will be able to compare this new information with information collected for previous breeding atlases in 1970 and 1990, and for the last winter atlas of the early 1980s.

The current project began in 2007 and continues until 2011. When completed, it will provide invaluable information on the state of our birds that will help guide conservation work for the future. Much has changed in our countryside and urban areas since the last survey 20 years ago, so it is really important for us to find out which bird species are doing well and which most need our help.



Goldfinch records from 1970



Goldfinch records from 1990



Image by Shay Connolly

The Goldfinch, one of the many birds being surveyed.



What will the Goldfinch records be for 2011?

Your school can play a vital role in protecting Ireland's birds by taking part in the Bird Atlas.

How to take part

The project co-ordinators are keen to involve as many people as possible, including our younger generations. Hopefully your school will play an important part in helping fill the gaps on the maps. It's a perfect opportunity to learn more about the birds that can be found around your school and surrounding area and for you to be excited by Ireland's amazing birdlife.

Taking part in the Bird Atlas is simple. Just record the species seen in or around your school during both the winter (November to February) and summer (April to July). You may decide to dedicate 10 minutes each week to recording the birds after lunch from a classroom window or perhaps take a walk with your class in the school grounds each month recording the species you see. Whether you do this each week or month and for 10 minutes or 1 hour is entirely up to you. Known as Roving Records, these records are extremely valuable as they allow us to build a list of species for your local area.



Text and images courtesy of www.birdwatchireland.ie

You don't need to have a good knowledge of all birds to take part, as each bird record is important. All common species including Wren, Robin, Starling and Blackbird all contribute to the maps.



Sending on School Roving Records

You can download the School Roving Records forms or email Brian Caffrey, Atlas Co-ordinator at bcaffrey@birdwatchireland.ie to have one sent to you. You can fill it in electronically and email it at the end of each recording period to the Atlas Co-ordinator. You can also enter your records directly online at www.birdatlas.net which will allow your sightings to appear on the map very quickly. This requires a teacher from each school to register on the website.

