



David Lindo AKA **The Urban Birder** introduces us to the birds of our towns and cities

URBAN BIRDWATCHING



HERRING GULL

Baby birds and uncle birds
I've been interested in wildlife and in particular birds ever since I was a small boy. Back then I used to watch them from my back bedroom window after I had come in from primary school. I didn't really know what I was looking at so I called sparrows 'baby birds', starlings 'mummy birds', blackbirds 'daddy birds' and crows 'uncle birds'!

Watch the skies
Well, I've learnt that those birds have proper names, that there I have also discovered that there are lots of other birds to be seen in

Getting up early
The best time to see birds in urban areas is usually in the early morning. There is less disturbance

from humans as most people are still in bed! If you watch your back garden or visit your local park at this time you might be surprised at what you see. Spring and summer are the busiest months for birds but it's always worth getting up early to see what's around. In the

spring you might be treated to blackcrows singing from the tops of trees. In the summer you might see swiffling swallows overhead and swooping swallows. In the winter, the tougher weather conditions will bring birds to your garden in search of food and water which can also help you to get a closer look at them.

Here are just a few of the birds you might find in our towns and cities



JACKDAW
This small crow is roughly the size of a pigeon. They can be commonly seen around the edges of our towns and cities and often nest in chimneys.



WAXWING
This winter visitor from Scandinavia is perhaps the prettiest bird you are likely to come across in an urban area. Look out for visiting flocks this winter as they raid the berries from rowan trees planted on our urban streets and around supermarket car parks.



STARLING
Starlings were once much more common than they are today but they are still a very recognizable urban bird. They are often seen in flocks or perching on telegraph wires and they love probing lambs with their sharp beaks in search of tasty morsels.



BLACK-HEADED GULL
A familiar sight in many cities. Despite the name it actually has a chocolate-brown coloured hood during the summer and in the winter it has a couple of dark smudges behind its eyes instead.



BLACKBIRD
This familiar thrush is one of the most common British birds. Its song is a very pleasant fluty whistle - a common sound on summer mornings in the city and in the countryside.



CARRION CROW
This is the typical crow that most of us see on a daily basis. Noisy, they are often the first to robb and drive away predators like cats and sparrowhawks. *Hooded crow in N. Ireland



PIED WAGTAIL
These small birds are forever wagging their long tails - hence their name. Pied wagtails are famous for forming large winter roosts in trees right in the centre of towns and cities.



HOUSE SPARROW
Another bird that was once a more common sight in city centres than it is today. London Wildlife Trust is running a project to create inner city habitat for sparrows.

Find out more

You can find out more about David's urban adventures at his website theurbanbirder.com. Download a spotting sheet of urban birds at: wildlifewatch.org.uk/spotting-sheets

Pics: Herring gull by Norman Brazendale, natural; Jackdaw, Blackbird, Starlings, Carrion crow and Waxwing by Russell Spencer; House sparrow by Richard Burkmar; Pied wagtail by Dave Bevan; natural; Black-headed gull by Neil Aldridge