

Donegal's Birds



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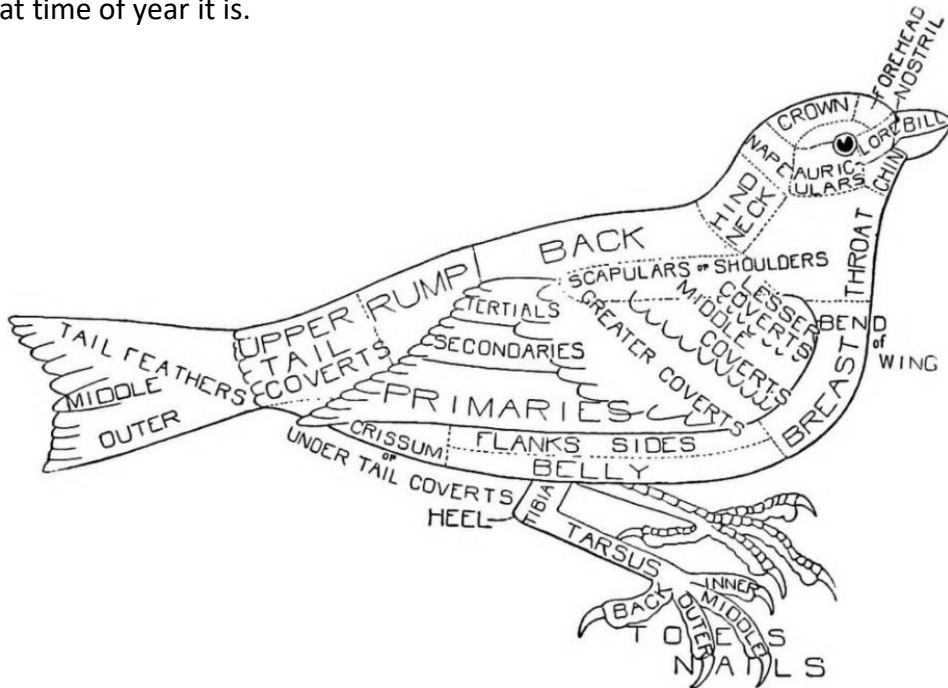
A look at some of Donegal's most common birds

Identifying a bird

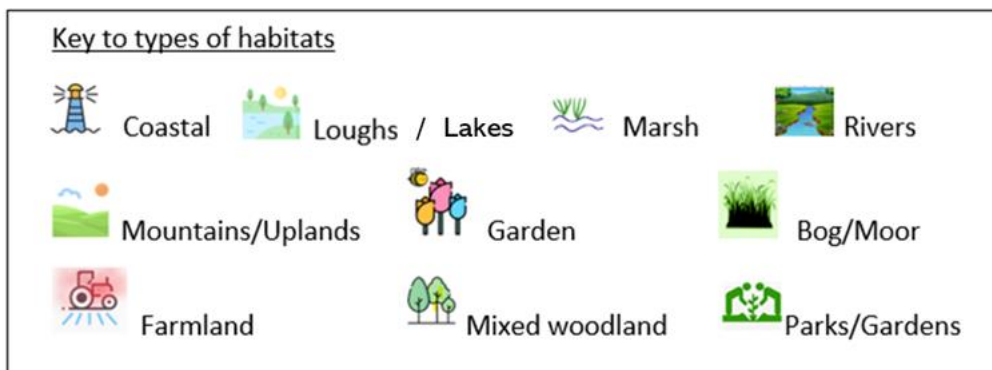
You don't need to identify a bird to enjoy watching it. Whether it's an eagle that soars majestically above, or the tiny wren that flits from branch to branch in search of its next meal, both have their own fascination. It adds to the moment, however, if you can identify it and then return home to look up more information about the bird. All species have their own particular niche in nature. How they live and breed can bring added enjoyment, whether it is for your own memories or to share with others. Their ancestors have been around since the time of the dinosaurs and have evolved over time to adapt to changing habitats and food supply.

Birds are a daily feature of nature, even though you may not notice them at the time. They are many and varied in types, size, plumage, diets and characters.

Here we set out some of the most common birds that you may see on your walks, depending on the area you are in and what time of year it is.



Detail that a bird spotter might look for in trying to identify which type of bird they were looking at



Male -



Female -



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Black Headed Gull

1.



Call: a croak which can sound shrill, long and drawn-out, or a short sound.



[Black – Headed Gull call](#) 🔊

Blackbird

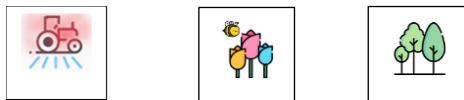
2.



3.



Call: alarm call is a loud “chook chook”.
Song: rich warble ending on a squeaky note.



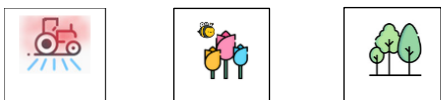
[Blackbird song](#) 🔊

Blue Tit

4.



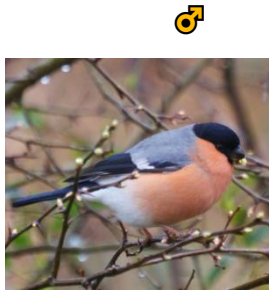
Call: a thin “si, si, si”.
Song: sharp “siiii, siiii, siiii-chu-chu-chu”.



[Blue Tit song](#) 🔊

Bullfinch

5.



6.



Call: a quiet chattering, whistling and warbling. Its descending calls of “duu” or “diuu” seem sad.



[Bullfinch call](#) 🔊

Buzzard



7.

Call: a loud, mewing “pee-uu”.



[Buzzard call](#) 

Chaffinch

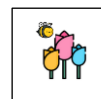


8.

Call: a loud “pink, pink”.
Song: short descending series of trills.



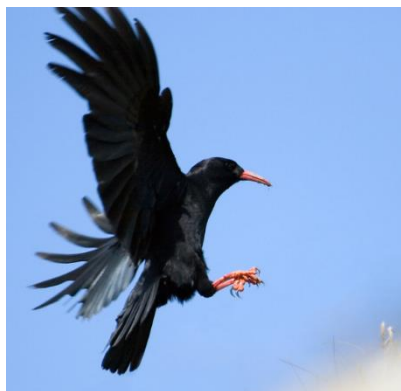
9.



[Chaffinch call](#) 

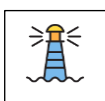
[Chaffinch song](#) 

Chough



10.

Call: The calls can be whistling, twittering or even squawking.



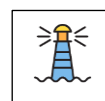
[Chough call](#) 

Common Tern



11.

Call: Shrill and clanking calls of “krier” are often heard along with angry noises.



[Common Tern call](#) 

Cormorant



12.

Call: mostly throaty and croaking, like “chroho-chrohochro-ho”. Females add a high “flii-flii-fli” - also cackling by both.



[Cormorant call](#) 🔊

Corncrake



13.

Call: attracts attention with its very distinctive “crex crex” call on warm evenings in summer.



[Corncrake call](#) 🔊

Cuckoo



14.

Call: famous for its “cuckoo” call.



[Cuckoo call](#) 🔊

Curlew



15.

Call: song consists of a series of “guug-guug-guug”. Calls are very different – from a fluting “tluih” to an excited “tui tui tui tui”.



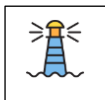
[Curlew call](#) 🔊

Eider Duck



16.

Call: during mating season, the male attracts attention with a nasal yelp “a-huui”. The females cackle in a deep voice.



[Eider Duck call](#)

Gannet



17.

Call: a rough “arrah arrah” or a soft “krok krok”. Before flight, a “u-ah” can be heard.



[Gannet call](#)



Golden Eagle



18.

Call: a quiet bird. The calls consist of weak whistling.



[Golden Eagle call](#)

Goldfinch



19.

Call: A smooth but ear-piercing “sti-ge-litt” often made in flight. The song is a silent chirping, interrupted by calls.



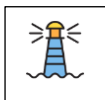
[Goldfinch song](#)

Great Northern Diver



20.

Call: makes a short barking “kwoek” in flight. It has a mournful clamour and eerie laughter at the breeding site.



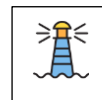
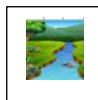
[Great Northern Diver call](#) 

Grey Heron



21.

Call: a long croaky and scratchy “rrrrack”. This is made at full volume in flight.



[Grey Heron call](#) 

Hooded Crow



22.

Call: a croaky, very audible “krrah”, often repeated several times.



[Hooded Crow call](#) 

House Martin



23.

Call: in flight, rough calls like “schrip and brrit”. It also has an alarm call with a sequence of shrill “sier” sounds



[House Martin call](#) 

House Sparrow



24.



25.

Call: a one syllable chirp, a “chirrup” or a more grating or annoying “churr”.



[House Sparrow call](#) 🔊

Jackdaw



26.

Call: has a variety of calls, but typically “schack” and a bright “kjack” are the main calls.



[Jackdaw call](#) 🔊

Kestrel



27.

Call: easily identifiable ear-piercing “ki kii ki ki” normally in flight, but audible at low level at breeding site.



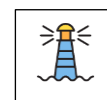
[Kestrel call](#) 🔊

Knot



28.

Call: before taking off, the bird makes rough “grott” sound, transforming to “twit twit” in flight.



[Knot call](#) 🔊

Lapwing



29.

Call: a hoarse “ki wi” or “wit wit wit wit” which is sung in flight.



[Lapwing call](#) 🔊

Long Eared Owl



30.

Call: male makes a variety of dull “huh” calls. The call is similar from the female but sounds as if made through a comb and paper.



[Long Eared Owl call](#) 🔊



Magpie



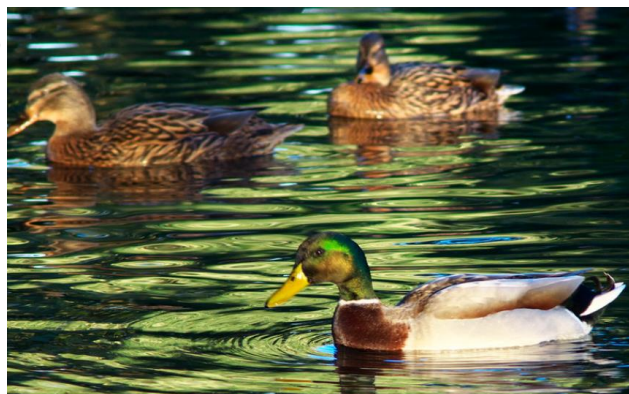
31.

Call: various sounds of which its rattling calls are the most common.



[Magpie call](#) 🔊

Mallard



32.

Call: different croaky and whistling calls.



[Mallard call](#) 🔊

Mistle Thrush



33.

Call: loud, rattling “Prrrt”. The song is similar to a Blackbird’s.



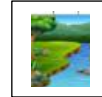
[Mistle Thrush song](#)

Moorhen



34.

Call: a gurgling “gurrk” but also short and sharp calls.



[Moorhen call](#)

Mute Swan



35.

Call: nasal “uink”. When it comes across enemies it makes a loud hissing “kchrr” sound.



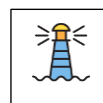
[Mute Swan call](#)

Oystercatcher



36.

Call: mating sound is a “kiwick kiwick kiwick” which ends with a trill. In flight, the bird makes a “kiweep” sound.



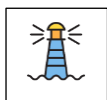
[Oystercatcher call](#)

Peregrine Falcon



37.

Call: a “grae grae grae”, often made in long rows and resembling the notes of the Kestrel.



[Peregrine call](#) 🔊

Pied Wagtail



38.

Call: a sharp “chiss-wick” is most frequently heard. When alarmed, it may give a “zeet”.

Common throughout Ireland

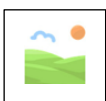
[Pied Wagtail call](#) 🔊

Raven



39.

Call: a variety of different sounds, mostly a deep gurgling “grog”.



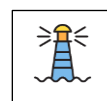
[Raven call](#) 🔊

Redshank



40.

Call: melodic and fluting “tju du du”, commonly heard on mud flats. They have a yodelling song that is rarely heard.



[Redshank call](#) 🔊

Robin



41.

Call: up to 275 song themes often appearing sad. It also has a sharp “tick” sound which is often made in a row as a warning call.



[Robin song](#)

Rook



42.

Call: a rough “krrraah”



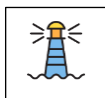
[Rook call](#)

Sand Martin



43.

Call: in flight, it produces purring sounds of “tshirrt”. It also has a high pitched “zier”



[Sand Martin call](#)

Sanderling



44.

Call: bright but strong “beet” or “bit” repeated several times.



[Sanderling call](#)

Shag



45.

Call: inside the colony, the male utters clicking and grunting sounds. A typical sound is “ark-ik-ark-ik....”.



[Shag call](#) 🔊

Skylark



46.

Call: sings in flight, consisting of quaver-like elements and swirling tones. From time to time its rough calls sound like “trr lit” or “trip”.



[Skylark song](#) 🔊

Song Thrush



47.

Call: the call is a sharp “zipp”. It has a very melodic song constantly repeating series of notes.



[Song Thrush song](#) 🔊

Sparrowhawk



48.



49.

Call: makes long, sequenced calls “gi-gi-gi”, both solo and in duet. When the bird feels threatened, it sounds faster.



[Sparrowhawk call](#) 🔊

Starling



50.

Call: a hoarse “arr”. They can be melodic and sound mechanical and can imitate more than ten bird species in a song line, with squeaking and whistling.

Widespread but scarce in the uplands.

[Starling call](#) 🔊

Stonechat



51.



52.

Call: most frequently heard is “vish-track-track”. Their song is a quiet scratchy warble.



[Stonechat call](#) 🔊

Swallow



53.

Call: musical twittering often heard. It makes a “tswit tswit” call when it feels threatened.

Widespread throughout Ireland in summer, apart from upland areas

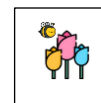
[Swallow call](#) 🔊

Swift



54.

Call: most frequently heard is a high-pitched scream “srrrrrii”.



[Swift call](#) 🔊

Tree Sparrow



55.



56.

Call: a slightly nasally "chu-wit"



[Tree Sparrow call](#) 🔊

Treecreeper



57.

Call: high-pitched "ssrri" three or four times in a row.



[Treecreeper call](#) 🔊

Tufted Duck



58.



Call: display call described as a nervous, quick, bubbly series of accelerating notes.



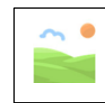
[Tufted Duck call](#) 🔊

Wheatear



59.

Call: soft whistle "hiit" and a harder "chack". The song is a quick, melodic whistle, frequently including the "hiit" call note.



[Wheatear call](#) 🔊

White-Fronted Goose



60.

Call: Makes babbling and sweeping sounds which are interrupted from time to time by "klik klik klik klick" calls.



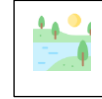
[White-Fronted Goose call](#) 🔊

Whooper Swan



61.

Call: one of the noisiest swans. In flight, it makes a loud, trumpeting "anghoe".



[Whooper Swan call](#) 🔊

Wood Pigeon



62.

Call: song consists of a hollow, three-noted cooing - "whooo who huhu".

Widespread apart from hills and mountains.

[Wood Pigeon call](#) 🔊

Wren



63.

Call: includes an abrupt "check" or longer "churrrrr..". The song is a drawn-out series of trilling notes - quite shrill and loud, ending abruptly.

Widespread apart from hills and mountains.

[Wren song](#) 🔊

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