



Thorndon Birdlife

April 2024

The tiny **wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) with its typically cocked tail, is a welcome and common visitor to gardens across town and countryside. They are a family of brown passerine birds in the predominately New World family *Troglodytidae*. The family includes 88 species divided into 19 genera. Most wrens are visually inconspicuous though they have loud and often complex songs. Exceptions include the relatively large members of the genus *Campylorhynchus*, which can be quite bold in their behaviour. Wrens have short wings that are barred in most species and they often hold their tails upright. They are primarily insectivorous, eating insects, spiders and other small invertebrates, but many species also eat vegetable matter and some will eat small frogs and lizards.



The wren is the most numerous wild breeding bird in the UK, although its numbers can fluctuate, with declines after cold winters. Where it occupies far flung islands, the breeding populations have become so isolated that new subspecies have evolved; *hirtensis* on Fair Isle and *hebridensis* on St Kilda are larger and darker than their mainland cousins, and their songs differ slightly too.



European wrens are both sedentary (as in Britain) but will be migratory in parts of Europe, flying anything up to 2500 km (1500 miles) with some migrating all the way from Scandinavia down to Spain.