

Sparrow is Scotland's top garden bird

THE HOUSE sparrow is still the most common bird seen in Scottish gardens, but according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) the species is suffering a dramatic long term decline.

The results of RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch 2024 show that the house sparrow came top for the 13th year in a row, ahead of the starling and blue tit.

Despite its success, the charity warned the species suffered a decline in the average numbers recorded per garden compared to 2013.

More worryingly, house sparrow numbers have declined by 60% since the counts began in 1979.

The Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest annual wildlife survey, offering insights into how some of the most common garden birds are faring.

This year, over 40,000 people in Scotland took part, counting more than 800,000 birds.

The house sparrow and starling held the top two positions while the blue tit swapped places with the chaffinch to reclaim third place and the blackbird once again completed the top five.

The woodpigeon, great tit, robin, goldfinch and coal tit made up Scotland's garden top ten.

House sparrows (-60%), starlings (-83%), robins (-25.1%), greenfinches (-68.7%) and chaffinches (-73.5%) have all suffered long term declines, while blue tits (+24.4%), great tits (+61.4%) coal tits (+247.7%) wrens (+67.9%) and wood pigeons (+1058%) have all increased.

Anne McCall, Director of RSPB Scotland, said: "There's been no let-up in the decline of our wildlife over recent decades, with one in nine wildlife species at risk of being lost from Scotland.

"However, our gardens and community green spaces can make a positive difference to the ongoing nature crisis.

"They can give a crucial lifeline for struggling species by providing a patchwork of potential homes for nature across the country."

She added: "To halt nature's decline and turn round its current downward trajectory, we need to help it return across the country and make it a natural feature of everyday life.

"Our fields, farms, and towns need help to let nature back in – our gardens and community greenspaces provide the perfect place for us as individuals to start."



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