

The Telegraph

A rousing chorus

Birds sing for their own reasons, not to please us, so a university study into this topic is unlikely to produce any meaningful answers.



Feathered friends: university scientists are looking at the psychological effects of listening to birdsong Photo: ALAMY



By [Telegraph View \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/)

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Scientists at the University of Surrey are calling for more research on the psychological effects of listening to birdsong. There are, it is true, worse things to research, but it is hard to think that any number of electrodes and brain scans are likely to elucidate this welcome experience of human life. We may anthropomorphise birds, asking ourselves, when we hear them bursting into song above the dustbins on these austere, chill, dark mornings, just what they find to sing about. Yet it is their very lack of human motives that makes their song so refreshing, just as the rising sun is cheering, though it does not mean to be. Birds sing for their own purposes, not to entertain us, and they notably shun applause. We may think that in making music while we work we imitate these creatures, but we gain most from them merely by building houses and gardens to our mutual advantage.

[Heard but not seen: the otter I never knew \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/active/9066939/Heard-but-not-seen-the-otter-I-never-knew.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/active/9066939/Heard-but-not-seen-the-otter-I-never-knew.html)

[You can't live off a view - but nothing feeds the soul like the wilderness \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth)

[/countryside/8951071/You-cant-live-off-a-view-but-nothing-feeds-the-soul-like-the-wilderness.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/countryside/8951071/You-cant-live-off-a-view-but-nothing-feeds-the-soul-like-the-wilderness.html))

[The whites of spring: seasonal snowdrops \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardenstovisit/9025624/The-whites-of-spring-seasonal-snowdrops.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardenstovisit/9025624/The-whites-of-spring-seasonal-snowdrops.html)

[Country Diary: Squirrels put on a wonderful show \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/country-diary/9028211/Country-Diary-Squirrels-put-on-a-wonderful-show.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/country-diary/9028211/Country-Diary-Squirrels-put-on-a-wonderful-show.html)

[The future is less grey as red squirrels battle their big, bullying cousins \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/8892119/The-future-is-less-grey-as-red-squirrels-battle-their-big-bullying-cousins.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/8892119/The-future-is-less-grey-as-red-squirrels-battle-their-big-bullying-cousins.html)

[Confessions of a lost voice in a lost world \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/countryside/8881411/Confessions-of-a-lost-voice-in-a-lost-world.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/countryside/8881411/Confessions-of-a-lost-voice-in-a-lost-world.html)

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