

# ID CHALLENGE



## MARCH: WOODLAND BIRDS

THIS MONTH'S CHALLENGE FEATURES SIX BIRDS WHICH READILY OCCUR IN WOODLANDS

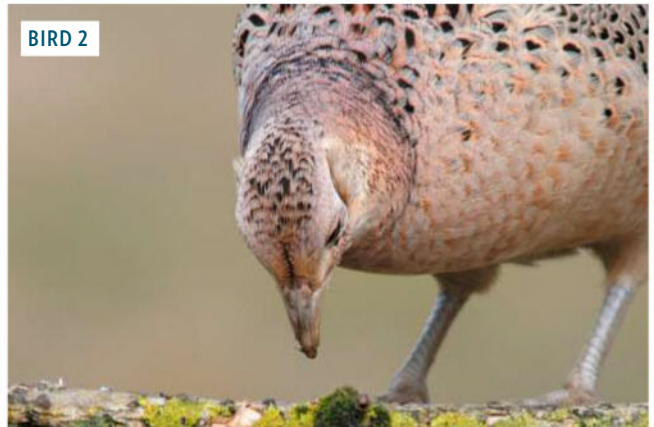
Some birdwatchers cut their birding teeth at the local lake, others on estuaries, and more still in their local woodland. Most garden birds are really woodland species which have found the semi-natural equivalent around humans' habitat. So, birdwatchers who start out with their gardens should have a good grasp of the basics of woodland birdwatching. For these people, this month's ID Challenge should

present no excessive difficulties. Indeed, it could be argued that it is too easy; you decide! Here, as usual, are six birds for you to identify. All are regular British species which are found in woodland in the UK. All you have to do is name them, then turn the page to see our answers and solutions; and then turn the page once more for some general tips on woodland bird identification.



BIRD 1

WHAT AM I? .....



BIRD 2

WHAT AM I? .....



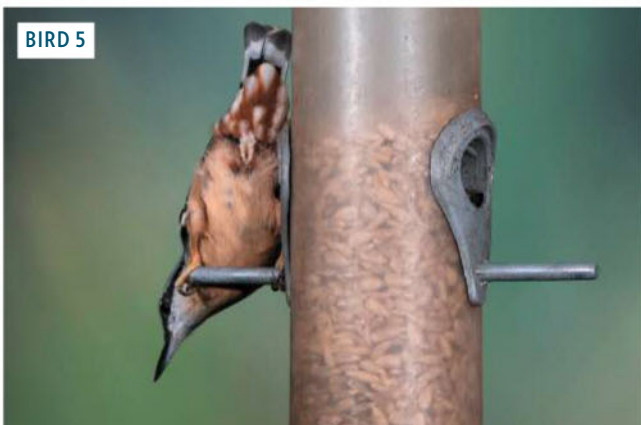
BIRD 3

WHAT AM I? .....



BIRD 4

WHAT AM I? .....



BIRD 5

WHAT AM I? .....



BIRD 6

WHAT AM I? .....

TURN OVER TO  
FIND OUT IF YOU  
ARE CORRECT!



## MY FAVOURITE SITE...

“Despite being largely fenland around here, there are some great woods near Peterborough, including Bedford Purlieus, where Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers still breed”

Mike Weedon, assistant editor



**SNAP IT!**  
and send it to  
[birdwatching@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:birdwatching@bauermedia.co.uk)



**NEXT MONTH**  
Spring warblers



Wildscotphotos/Alamy



Philip Magridge/Alamy

## BIRD 4

As with the previous mystery bird, there are no prizes for guessing the general type of bird we are dealing with here. This is clearly a thrush, and a typically spotted one at that. We have three ‘regular’ speckled thrushes in the UK, the Song Thrush, the Mistle Thrush and the Redwing. The latter has an obvious pale supercilium (pale ‘eyebrow’ above the eye), and dark line ‘though’ the eye; the breast spots are really streaks, and there is a reddish-brown patch on the flank. Perhaps the best way to tell Song from Mistle Thrushes in photos is to look at the breast/belly spots. If they are shaped like arrow heads and in longitudinal rows it is a Song Thrush. Like here! The ochre wash of the breast confirms that this is a **Song Thrush**.

### KEY FEATURES

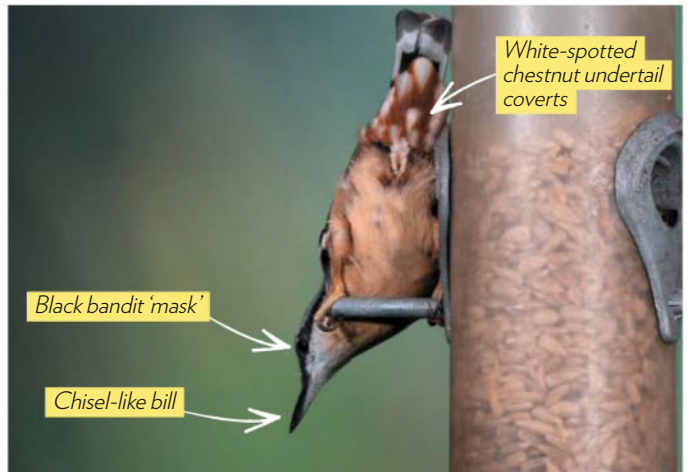
- ▶ Typical thrush appearance, with speckled underparts
- ▶ Buff or ochre breast, paler belly
- ▶ Spots like arrowheads
- ▶ Spots arranged in longitudinal rows

## BIRD 5

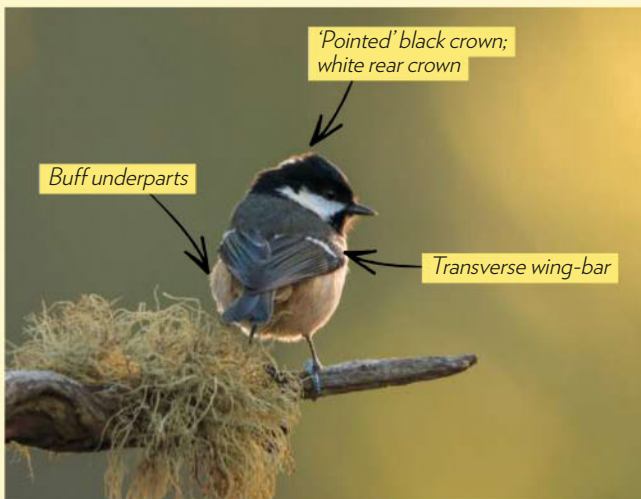
Someone appears to have put a feeder out in this bit of woodland. Or perhaps this woodland bird was doing what many have done before it, and taking a garden for an extension of its woodland habitat. The first thing that may strike you is that the bird appears to be upside down, or at least facing downwards. This, in itself, is a clue. There is a long, straight, pointed, almost woodpecker-like bill. Then the colour: a rich chestnut buff on the belly and breast fading to an even richer chestnut with white spots on the undertail coverts. The throat is white and there is a black stripe through the eye and perhaps blue-grey above it. It has to be a typically upside-down **Nuthatch**.

### KEY FEATURES

- ▶ Upside down stance
- ▶ Woodpecker-like bill
- ▶ Buff underparts; spotted undertail coverts
- ▶ Black ‘bandit mask’



Brian Pollard/Alamy



Calum Dickson/Alamy

## BIRD 6

This bird is a tit. The black cap, white cheeks and black bib give this much away. Also, we can go further and say it is not a Blue Tit (which would have a blue cap) or a Crested Tit (which has a black and white spotted crest). The obvious transverse white wing-bar rules out Marsh Tit and the very similar Willow Tit. So, we are left with Great Tit and Coal Tit. Perhaps the biggest giveaway is the hint of a peak or crest to the crown, just in front of a white patch on the nape. Also, the bluish green, not green back (with blue wings and tail); and buff, not yellow, belly. The very thin legs confirm that this is the smallest British tit, a **Coal Tit**, a common bird throughout the country, including in coniferous woodland.

### KEY FEATURES

- ▶ Peaked, almost crested crown
- ▶ Transverse white wing-bar
- ▶ Blue-grey back with an olive tinge
- ▶ Buff underparts