

The Blue Tit



The Blue Tit

Scientific name: Parus Caeruleus

Irish Name: Meantán Gorm

Males: The Blue Tit is actually a number of different colours. It has bright blue wings, tail and crown, yellow underparts, a greenish back and mantle, white cheeks, and black eye stripe, bib and collar. They also have a black streak down the middle of the belly, and a white wing bar. The bill is black and the legs are a blue-grey.

Female: The female Blue Tit is very similar to the male but its colours are a little paler.

Juveniles: The juvenile birds are duller than the adults and have a greener crown, wings and tail, and yellow cheeks.

Song: The Blue Tit's song is high pitched and can be heard all year round.

Length: 11.5cm

Diet: Blue Tits have a varied diet. They mostly feed on insects and on caterpillars. In springtime they feed on pollen, nectar and sap, and in the autumn on berries.



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They are one of the most agile birds and are often seen hanging acrobatically upside down from bird feeders. They are also opportunists and will often peck through foil milk bottle tops for the cream.

Blue Tits will also peck at the soft putty that holds in the windows of our houses. Some think that they do this because of the linseed oil in the putty, though others believe it is simply because they are searching for food.

Breeding: The Blue Tit starts breeding in April. It prefers broad-leaved woodland, but is also found in farmland, parks and gardens. The Blue Tit will lay between 5 and 16 eggs and these will be incubated for approximately 12-16 days.

Nesting: Blue Tits will nest in any hole in a tree, wall or nest box. They are also well known for nesting in strange places. Nests have been found in old shoes, letter boxes and drain pipes. The nest is a cup made by the female from moss, wool, dead leaves, spiders' webs, and lined with down.

A Blue Tit will lay between 10 and 12 eggs. The eggs are laid at a time when there are a lot of green caterpillars around in order to help feed the young.

The eggs are smooth, glossy and white with purplish-red or reddish-brown spots. The female incubates the eggs by herself. After the young hatch, they are fed by both parents.

Interesting Fact: The Blue Tit is very territorial and rarely ventures further than a few miles from where it was born.

On Valentines Day many people thought you could tell the occupation of your future husband by the first bird you saw. If the first bird a girl saw was a Blue Tit she would marry a poor man.