

The Great Tit



The Great Tit

Scientific name: *Parus Major*

Irish Name: Meantán Mór

Males: The crown, nape and throat are black. The cheeks are white. The breast and belly are yellow with a black stripe down the centre. There is a white wing bar across the blue-grey wings. The back is a yellowish-green and the rump is blue-grey.

The Great Tits legs are grey-blue and the bill is black. Males and females can be told apart by the width of the stripe on the breast. The male has a broader stripe on its breast.

Female: The female has the same colouring as the male but has a narrower stripe on its breast.

Juveniles: Juveniles are paler and duller with yellowish cheeks and wing bar.

Song: The Great Tits has a varied range of songs. It is perhaps best known for its piercing song which sounds a bit like a bicycle pump and is usually heard in the spring and summer.

Length: 14cm

Diet: Great tits feed on insects, such as caterpillars and spiders, seeds, like beech mast, and berries. They will also feed from hanging garden feeders containing nuts and seeds. They are also known to follow Coal Tits to locate their food hiding places.

Breeding: Great Tits will start breeding in March. They lay between 7 and 15 eggs and these will be incubated for 13-14 days. The Great Tit's eggs are smooth, glossy and white with purple-red spots.

The female incubates the eggs by herself. After the young hatch, they are fed by both parents.

Nesting: Great Tits will nest in a hole in a tree or a wall, or among the twigs of old nests. The nest is a cup made from moss, grass and down, and lined with hair, plant down and feathers. They will also use Nest Boxes if available.



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Interesting Fact: The Great Tit is the largest of the tit family. As such it can be quite aggressive towards other tits especially at a garden feeding table.