

The Garden List

Contributed by Jos
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With the garden in Vilnius now over ten years old, many a sub-zero winter suffered, many a summer season come and gone, the following list totals up all the species seen, and gives a brief comment on status and abundance.

So here it is, all the species in my garden since 2000, including those actually in the garden and those recorded from the garden, including flying over.

With the addition of a calling Tengmalm's Owl in January 2012 and Woodlark in April 2012, the total currently stands at 112 species ...not including the one or two that I have forgotten!

Cormorant - occasionally seen flying over, less than annual. Bittern - one of the few species that is on the garden list by voice only. Birds breed on a lake half a kilometre away, can be heard booming on still spring nights. Grey Heron - regular fly-over species. Recorded every two-three months, usually singles, maximum three. Black Stork - only record is a pair flying over one June. White Stork - seen most years, usually singles or pairs in spring or autumn. Several years ago, a flock of about 160 drifted over in late August. Mute Swan - regular fly-overs, seen most years. Whooper Swan - one record, three birds flying over. White-fronted Goose - common on migration, overhead flocks recorded each year, especially in spring. Bean Goose - as with the previous species, frequently seen or heard flying over in spring, less so in autumn. Mallard - regular, birds fly over several times a year. Goldeneye - one pair bred on a nearby lake in 2006, female was seen flying over several times. White-tailed Eagle - two records - of a bird overhead some years ago, a pair in August 2017. Osprey - single record of three birds circling above the house one September. Lesser Spotted Eagle - occurred overhead about four times, on one occasion a pair. Marsh Harrier - surprisingly infrequent. Breeds nearby, but only three seen from the garden, the latest in July 2009. Common Buzzard - common, recorded throughout the year. Honey Buzzard - occasional records, mostly late summer. Sparrowhawk - frequent in the garden, often attacking at the feeders throughout the year, but more so in winter. Up to six can be present per winter. Hobby - occasional summer visitor, seen most years. Hazel Grouse - surprise record, one single seen on the track separating my garden from the adjacent pine forests. Grey Partridge - recorded once, a pair visiting the feeders early one winter. Quail - surprisingly, this species has been recorded twice! Cat caught one and brought it into the house, second was a calling bird a couple of springs later. Common Crane - occasional overhead, usually late autumn. Mostly pairs or small groups, one flock of several hundred one autumn. Lapwing - periodically seen flying over, usually in late autumn. Wood Sandpiper - recorded two or three times, always flying over. Greenshank - one flying over in August 2009. Woodcock - two records, one flushed off the track between the garden and pine forest in 2006 and a roding bird at dusk on 5 May 2011. Black-headed Gull - regular overhead during summer, wandering from the nearby lake. Common Gull - as Black-headed Gull, but much less frequent. Herring Gull - seen several times, mostly late summer. Common Tern - common in spring and summer, breeds on the nearby lake and regularly flies over. Black Tern - one record only, passage birds one spring. Wood Pigeon - surprisingly rare, only one or two fly-over records, restricted to autumn. Turtle Dove - one record, an individual flying over, then landing in the pines in August 2009. Feral Pigeon - one bird only, a single in summer 2003. Cuckoo - commonly heard in May and June, occasionally seen flying over. Tawny Owl - recorded only in 2007, 2009 and 2014, the first an individual heard on a number of occasions in early spring, the second a bird calling in June, and the final a calling bird in February. Tengmalm's Owl - one bird calling one night in January 2012. Common Swift - abundant overhead in the summer months. Most years one pair breeds in a Starling nestbox on an electric pole (usually occupying the box days after the Starlings have fledged). Black Woodpecker - occasional visitor to the general area, seen flying over several times a year. Great Spotted Woodpecker - common year-round visitor to the feeders, up to six daily in an average winter. Middle Spotted Woodpecker - formerly year-round visitor to feeders, no birds in 2008 or 2009. After a three year absence, a bird returned to the feeders on 9 March 2010, then a male back on the feeders from September 2010. Thereafter, one or two birds seen again regularly. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - occasional visitor, singles appearing once or twice a year. Male on the feeders in February and March 2009, periodically through the summer. Wryneck - three spring records, the most recent on a territory-holding bird in April 2011. All birds were seen in the pines at the end of the

garden, singing also. Skylark - overhead passage birds, most frequent in early spring as they migrate overhead in song. Woodlark - one singing on 2 April 2012. Swallow - common summer visitor, breeding in the general area. House Martin - very common in summer, breeding on neighbouring houses. Ignore my homemade martin nestbox! Tree Pipit - two records, both birds at the garden pond. White Wagtail - common in summer, breeding in neighbourhood and frequent on the lawn. Wren - occasional visitor, mostly in autumn. Waxwing - annual visitor, usually appearing in November and feeding upon the berries in the hedge. Flocks typically number around 40, but exceed 100 on occasion. Was the first bird I ever saw in this garden! Dunnock - scarce, three records only, the most recent a single in August 2009 and territory-holding birds in April-June 2011, probably breeding. Robin - reasonably common, though not resident. Most birds are in early autumn and favour the dense blackcurrant bush 'jungle'! Thrush Nightingale - nearby breeding pairs are commonly heard in May and early June, only actually seen in the garden on three occasions, all in late summer. Common Redstart - common summer visitor, one pair usually breeding in a nestbox. Black Redstart - moderately common in summer, one or two pairs breeding in the area and frequently seen on the roof of the house. Northern Wheatear - occasional, has bred in the area on occasion. Song Thrush - most frequent in spring, when sometimes appears on the lawn. Otherwise heard singing in neighbouring forest. Mistle Thrush - scarce, but birds seen most years, either in the pines or flying over. Redwing - most records of birds passing over during migration periods, frequently heard at night. Occasional winter birds have been attracted to apples. Fieldfare - the most abundant of the thrushes, with several pairs breeding in the area and birds often seen in the garden. Also recorded on passage and, most years, a few in the winter. Blackbird - moderately regular, usually in spring. Occasional birds, sometimes up to four, appear in winter (when rare overall in the country). Great Reed Warbler - a singing bird could be heard from the garden in May 2011, the bird holding territory in a reed patch some hundreds of metres beyond the pines. Garden Warbler - scarce, seen only every couple of years. Blackcap - annual, but not common in the actual garden. Breeds in the adjacent forest. Common Whitethroat - common early spring visitor, typically appearing at the end of April. Lesser Whitethroat - common spring migrant, singing in the hedges - usually arrives a week earlier than Common Whitethroat and also breeds in the area. Icterine Warbler - breeds in the adjacent pine forest and birds are often seen in the apple trees at the end of the garden, most frequently in June. Willow Warbler - breeds in neighbouring forest, regular in the garden. Chiffchaff - common breeder in the area, frequent in the garden, especially during autumn migration. Wood Warbler - several pairs breed immediately adjacent to the garden, relatively rare in the actual garden (two or three per year). Greenish Warbler - two records, a singing bird in a tree in the front garden for about ten days in May some years ago, another in the same tree in June 2009. Goldcrest - common in the pines, occasional in the garden. Spotted Flycatcher - one pair breeds every year, either under my roof or a neighbour's. Pied Flycatcher - abundant, three or four nestboxes in my garden alone are occupied, more in neighbouring areas. Frequently a single male controls two or three nestboxes. Red-breasted Flycatcher - four records, all autumn passage birds in early September - three live birds in the apple trees in the back garden, one brought in by the cat! Great Tit - abundant, one or two pairs breed each year in nestboxes and winter totals at the feeders usually reach around 500 birds. Blue Tit - less abundant than Great Tit, but still common. One or two pairs usually breed in the nest boxes, whilst the winter population typically stands at about 140 birds. Coal Tit - common in neighbouring pine forest, two or three visit the feeders some winters, none others. Crested Tit - between two and four birds usually visit the garden feeders each winter, otherwise occasionally seen or heard in the adjacent pines. Also two birds visited the feeders in the summer in 2009, arriving in July and staying thereafter through all subsequent summers and winters to date. Marsh Tit - common year-round visitor to the feeders, typically up to 12 at any one time. Willow Tit - present at the feeders most winters in variable numbers, typically less than four. Long-tailed Tit - occasional flocks moving through only. In contrast to my feeders at Labanoras, Long-tailed Tits have never used my garden feeders. Nuthatch - common year-round visitor to the feeders, usually four to six birds visiting. Treecreeper - occasional visitor, less than annual. Red-backed Shrike - recorded on three occasions, all spring males spending a day or two whilst on passage, the latest in June 2009. Great Grey Shrike - three records, all in winter. One bird spent a few weeks in the general area and twice caught Great Tits that were attracted to the feeders. Magpie - surprisingly rare, two records only in ten years! Common less than 5 km away. Jay - the only corvid that is common in my garden, up to 12 visit the feeders. Nutcracker - annual, but only birds flying over, typically in late August and September. Hooded Crow - rare, never actually seen in the garden, but flies over periodically, typically every month or so. Raven - common in the area and seen overhead on a daily basis. Starling - summer visitor only, one or two pairs breed in nestboxes each year. One winter record of a single individual late December many years ago (this species does not winter in Lithuania). Golden Oriole - breeds in the pines at the bottom of the garden, seen and heard throughout the spring and summer, most easily in May. House Sparrow - rare! Two records in eight years! Both concerned single birds joining the Tree Sparrow flock at the feeders on single dates in winter. Tree Sparrow - abundant and increasing. In eight years of feeding, the population has risen from winter totals in the region of 25 birds to the current flocks that number about 130. At the same time, birds have begun to use the nest boxes and one to two pairs breed in the garden, remaining birds scattered across neighbouring gardens. Chaffinch - moderately common in the area during the summer, but not frequent in the garden. Most garden records are of occasionals at the feeders in spring or summer or, even more rarely, during the winter (this species usually migrates out of the country for winter). Brambling - occasional visitor, annual. Most records are single or pairs at the feeders in the late autumn or early spring. Linnets - summer visitor, one pair breeds near the garden and is frequently seen on the wires or in the garden itself. Mealy Redpoll - occurs at the feeders with varying abundance, up to a dozen some winters, none in others. Lesser Redpoll - a Lithuanian rarity, two birds spent some time at the feeders in March some years ago, in company with an influx of Mealy Redpolls. Greenfinch - common at the feeders, numbers tending to peak in the latter parts of the winter. In a good year, counts can reach 120. Also breed in the general area and are occasionally seen throughout the summer. Goldfinch - occasional visitor, very rarely using the feeders (niger seed is not available in this country!). Siskin - numbers fluctuate considerably from year to year, abundant at the feeders some winters (up to 60), totally absent in others. Serin - occasional breeders. One pair seems to breed

about every third year. Hawfinch - regular throughout the year. Birds breed in the forest and frequently visit the garden to use the feeders or drink in the pond. Additionally, occasional birds are attracted to the feeders throughout the winter and, moreover, in early spring as migrants return to the country. Bullfinch - seen in the garden fairly rarely, most records being in the autumn as birds migrate through. Common Crossbill - periodic in occurrence. In good crossbill years, birds are regular in the pine forests and can be seen flying over the garden. Common Rosefinch - breeds in the general area. Nearby birds can sometimes be heard singing in the spring. Additionally, one or two have been seen drinking at the pond. Yellowhammer - regular at the feeders in winter, typically when the snow is at its deepest. Numbers sometimes peak at over 30. (Rook and Jackdaw are common just 2 km away, yet I have still never recorded them from the garden!)