



## SPECIES

Photos: Norman Crowson, Norman Crowson

# Spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Information: David Beattie

### All about the spotted flycatcher

- A small migrant that winters in Africa and South West Asia. Seen throughout the mainland UK.
- It is a slim bird with grey brown upperparts and streaky breast and throat. Length 14cm, wingspan 23–25cm and weighing 14–19 grams.
- It favours open woodland, farmland, parks and cemeteries.
- They can often be seen on a high perch which they fly from to catch their prey and return to the same spot.
- They feed predominantly on moths, butterflies, craneflies, damselflies etc.

### Why do spotted flycatchers need our help?

Reasons for the rapid decline of spotted flycatchers are climate change, intensive farming (loss of food) and loss of habitat. Much of this is in their wintering areas but also in their breeding grounds as people "tidy up" their gardens; particularly by spraying farmland with pesticides and herbicides, as it reduces food sources.

### How can we help?

- Reduce the use of pesticides in our gardens/land and by buying organic.
- We can keep pressure on both local and national government to implement action to limit climate change.
- If possible protect vulnerable nests from predation using leaves and twigs for camouflage.
- Put up open-fronted nest boxes.

**DID YOU KNOW?** There is at least one instance of spotted flycatchers sharing a nest with house martins. The result was 4 house martins and 1 spotted flycatcher successfully fledged from that spot!

#### How do I monitor and record?

- Recording and monitoring activities need to happen between May and early September. Check woodland and nest boxes for nesting birds.
- Towards the end of the breeding season (August/September) observe the number of successful and failed broods.
- Enter records into iRecord.

#### Learn more

- [bto.org/understanding-birds/species-focus/spotted-flycatcher/](https://bto.org/understanding-birds/species-focus/spotted-flycatcher/)
- [wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/birds/thrushes-chats-flycatchers-starling-dipper-and-wren/spotted-flycatcher/](https://wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/birds/thrushes-chats-flycatchers-starling-dipper-and-wren/spotted-flycatcher/)
- [rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/spotted-flycatcher/](https://rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/spotted-flycatcher/)
- Contact an A Rocha UK naturalist at [naturalist@arocha.org](mailto:naturalist@arocha.org)