

## Blackbirds in Gardens - a Vector-Borne RADAR project FAQs

For more information, please visit [www.bto.org/blackbirds](http://www.bto.org/blackbirds)

More information can also be found at [www.vb-radar.com](http://www.vb-radar.com)

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What is the minimum number of weeks I can record for?

It's great to record for as many weeks as possible, but don't worry if you can't commit to them all. You can make a valuable contribution even if you are only able to provide results for some of the weeks.

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Can I do multiple surveys in a single week?

Yes, you can if you want. We also welcome surveys at different times of day.

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Can I carry out this survey from more than one garden or change garden?

Yes, if you want or if you move. To do that go to the "add the additional garden" section and add in the new/additional garden. You will then be able to select it in the enter new count section and view its data in the Results section.

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I know I have multiple different Blackbirds visiting my garden even if I don't always see them at the same time. Why can't I count them separately and add the numbers together?

Sometimes it can be obvious that you have multiple individuals of the same age/sex visiting a garden but sometimes it can be more challenging or even impossible.

To standardise across different people and gardens we prefer to record peak counts i.e. the maximum count you see at any one time.

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Why are we recording separate peak counts both overall and of males, females and juveniles?

The peak or maximum count is intended to be broadly comparable to BTO Garden BirdWatch ([www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw)) where only a single overall maximum count is recorded per week.

By separating birds by age/sex we can consider things like the ratio of males to females to examine sex bias in gardens and of adults to juveniles as a measure of productivity (i.e. how good the breeding season is).

Because we record separate peak counts like this, it's possible your sum of the counts of age/sex categories may be different to your overall peak count (unless you saw all your Blackbirds at the same time in a segment) – this is fine.

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What if I have difficulty telling birds apart, such as females and juveniles?

Use our helpful identification guide within the survey web-app. If you are unsure which category a bird belongs to, count it as “unknown”.

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Why do you need the precise location of my garden?

This is to allow us to consider fine scale spatial data around your home that might be of interest to this study, such as the presence of still bodies of water or how urban or wooded the local landscape is.

A precise location allows us to see this information on a fine scale that we wouldn't necessarily get from just a postcode, especially in rural areas, where these can cover quite a large area.

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Can I do this survey at any time of day and any weather?

Yes, you can carry out this survey at any time of day and in any weather.

In particular, if you do multiple counts in one week and you are able, it will be extra helpful to us if you do additional counts at a different time of day.

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Will you accept paper submissions?

Unfortunately no, as we do not have the capacity to process them.

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I observed no Blackbirds; are you interested in my record?

Yes! Zero counts are still useful as this is important information for understanding how Blackbirds are doing and how they use gardens.

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Should I wait until I see a Blackbird before recording?

As you can start a survey count at any time and it is designed to fit around normal life, you do not need to wait until you see a Blackbird, but you can if you want.

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Where can I find out more about the project?

Visit [www.vb-radar.com](http://www.vb-radar.com) to find out more about the Vector-Borne RADAR project, or [www.bto.org/blackbirds](http://www.bto.org/blackbirds) to visit the Blackbird-specific project pages.

