

Coot

Fulica atra

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A round, sooty-black waterbird with a striking white bill and a white frontal shield running up the forehead — the source of 'bald as a coot'. Its feet are lobed rather than webbed. Coots are common on lochs, reservoirs, ponds and slow water around Dumfries all year, preferring more open water than the moorhens they are often confused with.

BEHAVIOUR

Coots dive for water plants, bobbing up like corks, and also graze on the bank. They are famously aggressive: territorial disputes involve two birds rearing back on the water and striking at each other with their big feet, and they will chase off ducks, swans and each other with equal enthusiasm. Chicks are startling — black down with a bald red-and-blue head and orange facial plumes.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Rails and crakes (Rallidae)
SIZE	36–38 cm
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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