

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A boldly pied woodpecker about the size of a blackbird, black above with two large white shoulder patches, white-barred wings and a vivid scarlet patch under the tail. Males have a red nape spot, juveniles a full red crown. Great spotted woodpeckers are common in woodland, parkland and mature gardens around Dumfries and come readily to peanut feeders, especially in winter.

BEHAVIOUR

The drumming is a territorial signal, not feeding: a very fast burst lasting under a second, delivered against a resonant dead branch, carrying several hundred metres. Both sexes do it, mostly from January to May. Feeding is by chiselling into bark for grubs and by wedging conifer cones into a chosen crevice — an 'anvil' — to hack out the seeds. They also raid other birds' nest boxes for chicks.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Woodpeckers (Picidae)
SIZE	22–23 cm · blackbird-sized
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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