

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Bird · Resident · here all year



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Unmistakable and endearing: a tiny pink, black and white ball of feathers with a tail longer than its body. Long-tailed tits move through Dumfries hedgerows, scrub and garden trees in tight family parties, calling constantly to keep in touch. They are not true tits at all but a separate family, and unlike the others they rarely use nest boxes, building instead one of the most remarkable nests of any British bird.

BEHAVIOUR

The nest is an elastic dome of moss bound with spider silk, camouflaged with lichen and lined with well over a thousand feathers — it stretches as the chicks grow. Adults whose own nest fails often stay to help feed a relative's brood. In winter the whole family roosts huddled in a row along a branch for warmth, which is what carries these very small birds through cold nights.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Long-tailed tits (Aegithalidae)
SIZE	14 cm · over half of it tail
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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