

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A compact, short-tailed, dagger-billed bird: blue-grey above, warm buff below with chestnut flanks, and a bold black stripe through the eye. Nuthatches are birds of mature broadleaf woodland, parkland and well-treed gardens. They have spread north through Scotland in recent decades and are now established around Dumfries — a genuinely recent arrival that older local birdwatchers remember not having.

BEHAVIOUR

Nuthatches move over bark in any direction, including straight down head-first, which no treecreeper or woodpecker does. They wedge nuts and seeds into bark crevices and hammer them open — the origin of the name 'nut-hack'. Nests are in tree holes, and the female plasters the entrance with mud to narrow it to exactly her own size, keeping larger competitors out. The song is a loud, ringing repeated whistle.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Nuthatches (Sittidae)
SIZE	14 cm · sparrow-sized
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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