

Skylark

Alauda arvensis

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A streaky sandy-brown ground bird with a short crest it raises when alert, white outer tail feathers and a rather heavy, walking gait. Skylarks live in open country — arable fields, rough grassland, the merse and saltmarsh edges of the Solway — and avoid trees, hedges and gardens entirely. They remain widespread around Dumfries but have declined severely nationally with changes in farming, and are red-listed.

BEHAVIOUR

The song flight is one of the great sights and sounds of the British countryside: the male climbs almost vertically, hangs at height for anything up to an hour, singing an unbroken stream of liquid trilling, then parachutes down. Nests are a simple scrape in grass, which makes them very vulnerable to early silage cutting. In winter skylarks gather in loose flocks on stubble and coastal fields.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Larks (Alaudidae)
SIZE	18–19 cm · larger than a sparrow
UK STATUS	Red-listed

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