

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

Bird · Resident · here all year



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A bright bunting of farmland hedgerow: males have a canary-yellow head and underparts, a chestnut-streaked back and a rusty rump, while females are duller and more streaked. Yellowhammers still sing along the hedges and field margins around Dumfries but are far scarcer than a generation ago, a decline driven by the loss of winter stubble and weedy field edges. They are red-listed.

BEHAVIOUR

The song is one of the easiest to learn — a fast repeated series of thin notes ending in a longer, drawn-out one, traditionally rendered as 'a little bit of bread and no cheese'. Males sing on into the hottest part of summer when most other birds have stopped. In winter yellowhammers form mixed flocks with other buntings and finches on stubble and around farm buildings, where spilt grain keeps them going.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Buntings (Emberizidae)
SIZE	16–16.5 cm · sparrow-sized
UK STATUS	Red-listed

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