In South Park Gardens there are at least twenty-three kinds of birds to be seen. They fall into several categories, but in this trail leaflet they have been grouped into big, medium sized and small. There are other ways of describing them, such as the type of food they eat and whether they are birds that migrate during the winter.

**Big Birds**

These include carrion crows, magpies, jays, wood pigeons, ring doves and feral (wild or untamed) pigeons.

- **Carrion Crow**
  - These are usually all black and will eat almost anything mainly the remains of dead animals (i.e.: carrion). They are here all the year and can be seen almost every day looking for things to eat on the grass. Their call is a distinctive ‘Caw’.

- **Magpie**
  - These birds are black and white and have long tails. They chatter a lot and like to pick up all sorts of things from the ground. They have big domed nests made of twigs and lay a lot of blue/green eggs with brown mottling.

- **Jay**
  - These are the noisiest birds in the park but their song is not pretty. They like to romp through the trees screeching loudly. If you get close to one they have a beautiful blue patch on each wing, chestnut coloured shoulders and, when they fly away from you, a white backside called in bird language a rump!

**Medium Sized Birds**

These include great spotted woodpeckers, mistle thrushes, song thrushes, starlings, feral pigeons, wood pigeons, ring doves and ring neck parakeets.

- **Great Spotted Woodpecker**
  - These birds are more usually heard than seen. They make a loud click sound with a second or so between each click. When you hear them look up to the tops of the trees and sometimes you will see a bird on the side of a branch. The young birds have a red cap. Sometimes in the early summer the great spotted woodpecker makes a very rapid drumming noise with its beak on dead boughs the tree trunk.

- **Mistle Thrush**
  - A pair of mistle thrushes has tried to nest in the park for the last five years in a holly oak tree in the North West corner but probably each year the squirrels have taken all the eggs. The birds make a dry tapping chant. Once you have heard it there is no mistaking it. Mistle thrushes are handsome birds with bold markings on their chests. They are a bit bigger than song thrushes.

- **Song Thrush**
  - Sometimes you can see a song thrush or so looking for worms on the grass. They are smaller than their relatives, the mistle thrushes, and make a much nicer song. They are not as common now as they used to be twenty years ago and nobody seems to know why.

- **Starling**
  - Flocks of starlings are common in the park. The adult birds have a most fantastic collection of coloured feathers. In the evenings starlings assemble in huge flocks called ‘angels’ and may roost in particular places such as the bridges over the Thames. The collective noun for starlings is a murmuration and if you listen to a flock chattering to each other you realize how apt this word is.

- **Pigeon**
  - The biggest pigeons in the park are wood pigeons. They look plump with short legs and clear white marks on either side of its neck. They graze on the ground looking for worms, spiders, and grass seeds. They also eat insects on trees and bushes. They have a distinctive call.

- **Ring Dove**
  - Sometimes you can see a pair of ring doves, also called Barbary doves, either on the ground like the wood pigeons looking for food or on the trees where it is easier to hear them making a gentle cooing sound. These are beautiful birds that are close relatives of the wood pigeon but smaller, mottled and more shy.

- **Feral Pigeon**
  - The feral pigeons are probably the most numerous birds of the pigeon family to be found in the park. They are originally from birds called wild pigeons that were taken from the wild and used as homing pigeons or as racing pigeons in the 19th century. They have a great variety of colours and are often quite pretty. They are unpopular with those who have to look after public places because of the mess they can make. They also can carry a nasty disease, called cryptococcosis, caused by a fungus that does not seem to harm the pigeons but it can harm some people.

- **Ring-neck Parakeets**
  - With emerald green feathers and rose red beaks, ring-neck parakeets are an exotic addition to suburban London. Originating from the Himalayas, they are noisy but very pretty.
PROOF
House sparrow
Robin
Coal Tit
Blue Tit
Greenfinch
Long-tailed Tit
sometimes flock in small trees.
like perching on the tops of trees and singing the day away. They
There are usually some greenfinches in the park, particularly in the
Gold Finches
Small Birds
Blackbirds like to sing in the tops of trees particularly in the early
morning when they are a big part of the dawn chorus. They are saying
‘Here I am’ to females and ‘This is my tree’ to males.

Redwing
Redwings visit the park between January and March most years from
Scandinavia. They browse in small flocks on the grass, foraging for
wrens and sparrows. They are not very shy and it is usually easy to
see them flying, perching or hopping about which is much more
prominent when they take off to fly. They look rather like
Redwings tend to be in flocks often in particular bushes. House sparrows can be
seen their ‘eyebrow’ and the reddish patch under their wings which is
much more obvious in the male. The male has a small black beak
and white head, warm brown upper parts, white under parts with buff
wings and tail. The female is brown, smaller and much quieter. Male
are quite common in Wimbledon and are attracted
to bird feeders. The sexes are broadly similar, with a red face, black
head. They are not easy to see. Unlike a house sparrow it has a small sharp beak
and white below, with black throat and top of
Blackbirds are quite common in the park and are attracted
to bird feeders. The males are easily
seen and produce a lot of very rapid clicks. They are not
appreciably a hedge accentor because of the beautiful song it can
produce and also because it belongs not to the sparrow family but to
appropriately a hedge accentor because of the beautiful song it can
The jenny wren is a tiny little bird, which
is almost always has its tail cocked in the
air. It makes quite a noise involving sometimes
a lot of very rapid clicks. They are not
too. Their feathers are grey/black above and
white below. They like to forage on hard
surfaces and are often seen near the base
of bushes and looking for tiny insects among the leaves. These are
common on the Gardens but, with care, you

Great Tit
In the spring and summer there are nearly always great tits in the
Gardens. They have a lot of songs to sing and they often flock with
other tits. All the great tits are very similar in a basic brown-crested
mouse-like squawk that they make but the great tit song is not at
all like a mouse. It is a very pretty bird and one of the most handsome
in the Gardens.

Blue Tit
Small flocks of blue tits are usually to be found in the Gardens. They
often flock with the other tits and sometimes on trees looking for
small insects. They are not often seen on the ground, in the trees they
make a noisy chatter that is quite typical and you will soon be able to
learn what is making the noise.

Long-tailed Tit
Pairs of long-tailed tits are commonly to be found in the park usually
in the spring and autumn. They make a big din and really deserve to
be called stimuli. The individual birds show a wide range of colours,
as the young birds and the older ones differ. The females are quite
distinctive and they flit from tree to tree following each other.

Coal Tit
This isomeasurable bird, the coal tit is a bit smaller than a great tit with
which it is easy to confuse. Look for the white patch on the top of
the head. The female and young are smaller. The coals are quite

Chaffinch
Chaffinch are often a pair of chaffinches on the east edge of the park
and they have tried to nest there some years but again the sparrows had
prevented them. Their song is a hurried twit. The female is a plump
duller. They build beautifully constructed nests of moss and tiny
twigs.

House Sparrow
House sparrows need to be one of the most common birds in London
but they are now far less common – perhaps our houses have fewer
nesting holes. Male house sparrows colour them familiar. Sparrows
are quite common in the park but not often, they like to eat sunflower seeds.

Hedge Sparrow
This inconspicuous bird, is sometimes called a dunnock but more
appropriately a hedge accentor because of the beautiful song it can
produce and also because it belongs not to the sparrow family but to
accurately a hedge accentor because of the beautiful song it can
produce and also because it belongs not to the sparrow family but to

This is one of a series of trail leaflets that have been produced for South Park Gardens as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund restoration project. These leaflets will help visitors to the Gardens explore a wide range of flora and fauna and will also help to interpret the history of the local

The others include:
• Trail Walk
• Local History of South Park Gardens
• Wildlife in South Park Gardens


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