

BLACKBIRD

The Latin name for the blackbird is *Turdus merula*.

The blackbird is a common name for a wide variety of birds with mainly black plumage. The common blackbird is a member of the thrush family.

It is a familiar medium-sized bird with a body length of 24-26cm. The male is all black apart from the yellow bill and eye-ring, whilst the female is browner, with a speckled breast and duller yellow bill.

The blackbird eats berries of all sorts from hedgerows or bushes, but it is basically a ground feeder, turning over dead leaves and other litter to get to spiders and insects. It also eats worms and small molluscs etc.

The male has a strong, melodious song (*tchook-tchook*) and when startled has a characteristic rattle.

The female lays 3 to 5 eggs that are greenish-blue with underlying grey marks freckled with reddish-brown.

Its nest is rather bulky with a foundation of moss and grasses with a mud cup further lined with finer grasses. The nest is usually found in hedges and shrubs.