



Gwent Wildlife Trust

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Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

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About

A fairly large, dumpy, short-legged wader, the woodcock lives in woodlands and on heathlands where its mottled plumage provides it with excellent camouflage as it probes around the ground for earthworms and beetles to eat. Spending most of its life in dense cover, UK birds are mostly residents but are joined by wintering birds from Finland and Russia. If you happen to disturb one, it will fly off in a zig-zag pattern between the trees before dropping back to the ground and the safe cover of the undergrowth.

How to identify

Only likely to be confused with the smaller snipe which is a bird of wet grassland and marshes, not woodland. The woodcock is brown with an intricate pattern of black and grey barring and broad, dark bars across the crown. It has short, greyish-pink legs and a very long, straight bill.

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Species information

i **Common name**
Woodcock

Latin name
Scolopax rusticola

Category
Birds
Wading birds

Statistics
Length: 33-35cm
Wingspan: 58cm Weight:
280g Average Lifespan: 4
years

🌍 Conservation status
Classified in the UK as an
Amber List species under
the Birds of Conservation
Concern review.

Where to



Farmland



Heathland



Woodland

When to find it



How can people help

Breeding populations of woodcock have declined in recent years due to habitat loss. Local Wildlife Trusts across the country are looking after woodland and heathland habitats for the benefit of all kinds of species. And you can help too: volunteer for The Wildlife Trusts and you could be involved in everything from monitoring populations to clearing scrub and coppicing, raising awareness to protecting nesting birds.

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