

GOLDCREST

Regulus regulus

Seen increasingly across the Marina.



Europe's smallest bird.

DESCRIPTION – The general appearance of a Goldcrest is that of a dull olive-green bird with pale whitish underparts and a conspicuous gold stripe on its crown. On closer inspection, there are two whitish wing bars and a dark mark on the wings. The black-bordered crest stripe is orange in the male and yellow in the female. The dark eye is easily seen against its whitish face. The thin bill is black and the legs are brown.

HABITAT – In autumn and winter, they forage in a variety of places, including hedges, low thickets and even clumps of gorse or brambles. Often joining flocks of other small birds. At other times of the year pine forests are the best places to see them. They're widespread and common across the whole of the UK; in autumn, large numbers arrive on the east coast from Scandinavia and make their way across dunes to more suitable habitat.

FOOD – Goldcrests eat tiny morsels like spiders, moth eggs and other small insect food, often hovering briefly.

NESTING –The nest is suspended near the end of a conifer branch and is made by the female. The nest is made from moss, lichens and spiders' webs, and lined with feathers. They will also nest among ivy. The female Goldcrest lays and incubates 7-8 eggs that are smooth, non-glossy and white or pale buff with brownish speckles. The eggs are about 14 mm by 11 mm. Both parents feed the young after they have hatched.



SONG – Their song is a quiet, high pitched twittering: "tweedly tweedly tweedly twiddleedidee". The call is a quiet "zi" or "zi-zi-zi", which is easily confused with **Treecreeper** and some tits.

OTHER FACTS –The main problem in identifying the Goldcrest is to first see it, as it is usually scurrying around tree trunks and branches, rarely keeping still. When there is a group of them, their very high pitched calls to one another can help find them.

The British resident birds are joined by immigrants from Scandinavia, Poland and Russia in the winter. Occasionally, huge numbers arrive on the east coast, such as in autumn 2005 when bushes, such as gorse and buckthorn, were "dripping with Goldcrests".