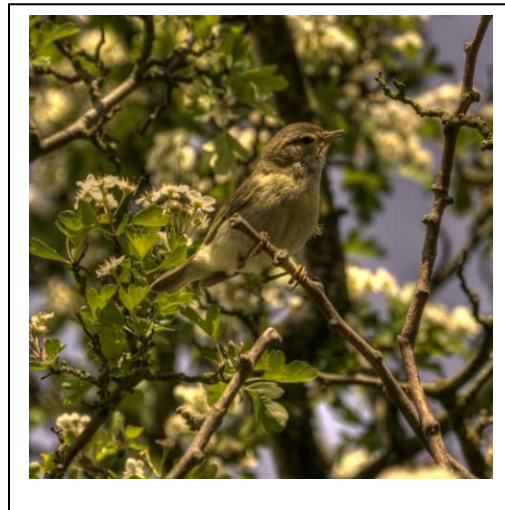


Willow Warbler

The Willow Warbler is a very common and widespread warbler which breeds throughout northern and temperate Europe and Asia, from Ireland east to Siberia. It is migratory, wintering in sub-Saharan Africa. Birds arrive in England from March to May, have usually just one brood and return to Africa in August and September.

The willow warbler is very similar to the Chiffchaff, but can be distinguished from that species by their paler legs and bill and its song which is a simple repetitive descending whistle, while the contact call is a disyllabic 'hoo-eet'.

It is a bird of open woodlands with trees and ground cover for nesting, including most importantly birch, alder, and willow habitats. The nest is usually built in close contact with the ground, often in low vegetation. Like most warblers it is insectivorous.



Willow Warblers prefer young, open, scrubby woodland with small trees, including coppice and young plantations up to 10–20 years old. High amounts of birch, alder and willow, with good lichen amounts, streams and damp areas, fields with large amounts of bracken and mosses, and patches of low bramble (for nest cover) are preferred. Thicket forming shrubs like blackthorn provide pockets of habitat. Deer browsing can degrade the required low cover.

Status

In England this species has on average decreased in population by 70% within the last 25 years, with the biggest declines in the southeast.