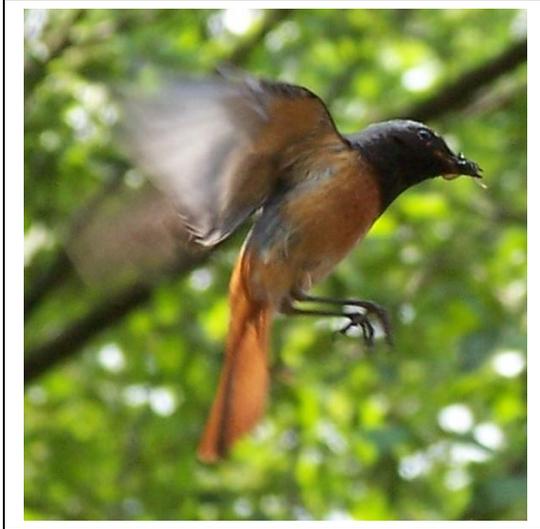


Redstart

The Redstart appears very like a Robin in many of its habits and actions. It has the same general carriage, and chat-like behaviour, and is the same length but slightly slimmer and lighter. The orange-red tail, from which it gets its name ("start" is an old word for "tail"), is frequently quivered.



Male



Female

The Redstart is a summer visitor throughout most of Europe and western Asia (east to Lake Baikal), and also in northwest Africa in Morocco. It winters in central Africa and Arabia, south of the Sahara Desert but north of the Equator. It is widespread as a breeding bird in Great Britain, particularly in upland broadleaf woodlands and hedgerow trees, but in Ireland it is very local.

The males first arrive in early to mid April, often a few days in advance of the females. Five or six light blue eggs are laid during May, with a second brood in mid summer in the south of the breeding range. It departs for Africa between mid-August and early October. It often feeds like a flycatcher, making aerial sallies after passing insects, and most of its food consists of winged insects. The call is chat-like and the alarm a plaintive single note, *wheet*, like that of many other chats.

Habitat

Redstarts prefer open mature birch and oak woodland with a high horizontal visibility and low amounts of shrub and understorey especially where the trees are old enough to have holes suitable for its nest. They prefer to nest on the edge of woodland clearings. In Britain it occurs primarily in upland areas less affected by agricultural intensification. They nest in natural tree holes, so dead trees or those with dead limbs are beneficial. Nestboxes are sometimes used. A high cover of moss and lichen is also preferred. They also use mature open conifer woodland, particularly in the north of the breeding range. Management to thin out trees is often useful.

Status

In England the redstart has declined by 55% in the past 25 years.