

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* in our garden, June 2023

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01. Female Hawfinch in our garden on 20.06.2023. Heavily cropped image. © K.McGee.

A single female Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was photographed in our garden on 20.06.2023. Unfortunately, I do not possess a lens suitable for bird photography so I used my 100mm macro lens from a considerable distance (about 20m) in poor light through an irregularly cleaned window! Not ideal as can be seen from the image quality, but you can tell what it is!

Hawfinches have been recorded visiting our garden sporadically since February 2018 (02) with all the records up to February 2023 being during the winter. All the records have always been of single birds and usually with very poor views among dense coniferous and yew foliage in secluded areas. Visits have almost always been short, no longer than a minute or two at best. Consequently, it is not clear if it is a single individual or if there is a small population of winter migrants using the surrounding area generally (Wissett's Wood is nearby). From the better views I've managed to obtain through binoculars I suspect it is a single female, but again, I cannot be certain; they really are very shy and elusive. So, imagine our surprise when an individual female suddenly started using a garden feeder on 10.06.2023 in the height of the breeding season! During all the previous winter records no birds were ever seen at garden feeders, just in dense foliage nearby. The last record was during the early morning of 20.06.2023 when I managed the photograph shown but no evidence of breeding was ever established. The legendary Hawfinch enigma continues.

One point worth mentioning is what I find to be the most striking identification features when poor views in poor light are almost expected with Hawfinches! The black 'chin' and the pure white tips on the tail feathers really stand out well in the field.

03-Feb-18	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
04-Feb-18	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
02-Mar-18	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
27-Nov-22	Shakenhurst
09-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
11-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
13-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
15-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
21-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
30-Dec-22	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
14-Jan-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
19-Feb-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
10-Jun-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
16-Jun-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
17-Jun-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst
20-Jun-23	Gardeners Cottage Shakenhurst

02. Screen shot from my birds Access database.

Images

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