

# Mistle thrush



I am a mistle thrush.

I am a greyish-brown bird with large black spots on a white breast.

Can you see the spots in the picture?

I look like a song thrush, but I am bigger.

I am called a mistle thrush because many years ago mistle thrushes were seen eating mistletoe berries.

Nowadays I eat more yew and holly berries.

I also like to eat earthworms, insects, slugs, snails, fruit and other berries.

Suggest a new modern name for this bird.

When I am on the ground I will hop.

You will often see or hear me high up in a tree.

I am a loud singer, and I start very early in the morning.

My warning song sounds like a football rattle.

I mainly sing to warn other mistle thrushes that this is my home and they should stay away.

However, at the beginning of the year I will sing in the hope of attracting a female partner.

Try to develop your own short song using whistles and clicks. You need to be able to repeat it several times.

In March I was hatched from an egg.

I had one brother and two sisters.

How many mistle thrush chicks were there?

My nest was built high up in a tree by my mother.

It was built from twigs, grass, moss, roots and leaves.

When I was a chick my mother kept me warm and protected me.

Both my parents fed me.

When I first left the nest I hid in cover to protect myself from predators.

Who do you think would like to eat a young mistle thrush?

Within a week of leaving the nest I had learnt to fly.

When I was old enough to look after myself, I joined a group of other mistle thrushes and we flew around the countryside looking for food.

## **Resource guarding**

During the winter I found a small group of holly trees, full of berries.

I would use one of my famous rattle calls to warn other birds to keep away.

If they did not back off I would try to chase them away.

This is called resource guarding, and makes sure the food is available just for me.

Do you think the mistle thrush is being greedy?
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See if you can find the following words:  
Mistle, thrush, spot, moss, twig

M	I	O	Q	M	O
I	N	S	P	O	T
S	N	O	W	S	W
T	H	R	U	S	H
L	A	D	Y	Z	O
E	D	T	W	I	G

How many points can you get?

Task	Tick	Points
Have you seen a mistle thrush?		3
Did you notice the spots on its breast?		2
Did you hear its alarm?		5
Total points		

Please try to answer these questions

What colour is a mistle thrush?

Why do male mistle thrushes sing?

What do they like to eat?

What do young mistle thrushes do when they are able to look after themselves?

If you were a mistle thrush, how would you defend a holly bush full of berries?