

A Wiki-based Key to Garden and Village Birds

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Abstract — A Wiki-based *Key to Garden and Village Birds* is available in two versions: a dichotomous, hyperlinked and printable version, and as step-by-step identification version. It is supported by *jKey Player* in English, Slovenian, Spanish, Romanian and German.

Index Terms — birds, Aves, key, identification, wiki, jKey Player.



1 INTRODUCTION

One of the first steps in discovering and understanding biodiversity is to identify the organisms around us. The study of biodiversity, and in particular the identification of organisms, is becoming part of educational curricula in primary and secondary schools and in many University courses across Europe.

After Gutenberg, information useful for identifying organisms was printed on paper. The constraints of a paper-printed text have forced most authors to organise information according to the hierarchical scheme of biological classification. Computer-assisted keys, on the contrary, allow us to identify organisms without necessarily using the characters of the classification in the biological system. Classification and identification belong to two different operational processes. Classification is the job of taxonomists, identification can be fun for anybody [1].

There are many identification tools available online, based on different platforms. One of the possible platforms is the Wiki. The advantage of wiki-based keys is that a community of users can work together in constructing, improving and enriching them in a collaborative way.

In the European project *KeyToNature*, two tools for creating and running wiki-based keys were developed: the *jKey Editor* and the *jKey Player*. The JavaScript based *jKey Player* is supporting interactive use, tracking and annotating previous decisions, and allows all decision steps to be easily revisable. The revision capability is especially useful in classroom use, allowing the quick identification of erroneous decisions, discussing the reasons for these, and continuing without

restarting the entire identification process. Additional functionalities like toggling the display of secondary text and images, and enlarging images on click, make the keys more user-friendly. The complementary web-based editing tool *jKey Editor* allows a form-based editing of the identification keys, which simplifies creating, modifying, pedagogically adapting, or translating existing keys [2].

2 KEY TO GARDEN AND VILLAGE BIRDS

The *Key to Garden and Village Birds* is a wiki-based identification tool, which includes text, pictures, drawings and sounds [4]. Original recordings of bird sounds are also displayed, which were stored in the Slovenian Wildlife Sound Archive, housed in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History (PMSL) in Ljubljana, Slovenia [3].

The key can be used both in a dichotomous hyperlinked printable version (Fig. 1) or in a step-by-step identification version (Fig. 2) supported by *jKey Player*. The target audience are pupils in primary and secondary schools, with the pedagogical goal to observe the birds and listen their singing and calling. Important was the contribution of the wiki-community, who translated the key into English [4], Slovenian [5], Spanish [6], Romanian [7] and German [8].

page discussion view source history


KEY NATURE

Key to Garden and Village Birds



Key to Common Garden and Village Birds of Europe — Tomi Trilar (show less)

This key is limited to observations of birds that are singing or otherwise producing sounds with their bills. **Geographic Scope:** Central Europe — **Source:** (original work) — **Collaboration:** open — **Status:** Under testing: **Sounds of 3 species are missing. Species pages not done (species links in red = not yet created).** — Edited by: Tomi Trilar, Gregor Hagedorn (formatting and minor adaptations), Bob Press (style and language improvements)




Show all extras

1 a Bird either clattering its bill or drumming on wood. 2 

1 b Bird singing or calling. 5


2 a Black and white bird, 100 to 115 cm tall, with half of that height being made up by the red legs. Often clattering its bill.  **White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)** 

2 b Bird less than half as large, usually climbing the trees using stiff tail as a support. Drumming rhythmically on tree trunks (woodpeckers). 3

3 a Back black with the white spots. Drums in spring, the drum rolls characteristically short.  Song consists of short, sharp, high-pitched notes.  **Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)** 

3 b Back green. 4

Fig. 1 – Dichotomous hyperlinked printable version of the wiki-based *Key to Garden and Village Birds* [4].







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Key to Garden and Village Birds

Key to Common Garden and Village Birds of Europe — Tomi Trilar
[Key overview \(printable\)](#)
[Start new identification](#)

(show less)

- Head yellow, like the breast. Back brown with dark strips. Song consists of a series of 5 to 8 high-pitched, rapidly repeated trills, flagging at the end *si-si-si-si-si-süü*. 


Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)
- Head blue. Wings and tail bluish. Song consists of clear fast trills *sisüüü*, which are repeated after a short pause.  (more...)


Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)
- Head black with large, white cheek patch. Underparts yellow with a black band stretching from the throat towards the tail. Rhythmic ringing song *ti-ta ti-ta ti-ta* or *ti-ti-ta ti-ti-ta ti-ti-ta*. 


Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Flag decision above as uncertain (check, then make your next decision)
Undecided: Try all alternatives

Previous decisions

1. Bird singing or calling.	revise
2. Singing mostly during the day.	revise
3. Bird rarely climbing tree trunks and then only climbing upwards without using tail as a support. (uncertain)	revise
4. Bird at most half of the size of the Blackbird.	revise
5. Bird more delicate in all its parts. Tail longer.	revise
6. Breast yellow.	revise

Fig. 2 – Step-by-step identification version of the wiki-based *Key to Garden and Village Birds* with an annotated step of uncertainty [4].

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