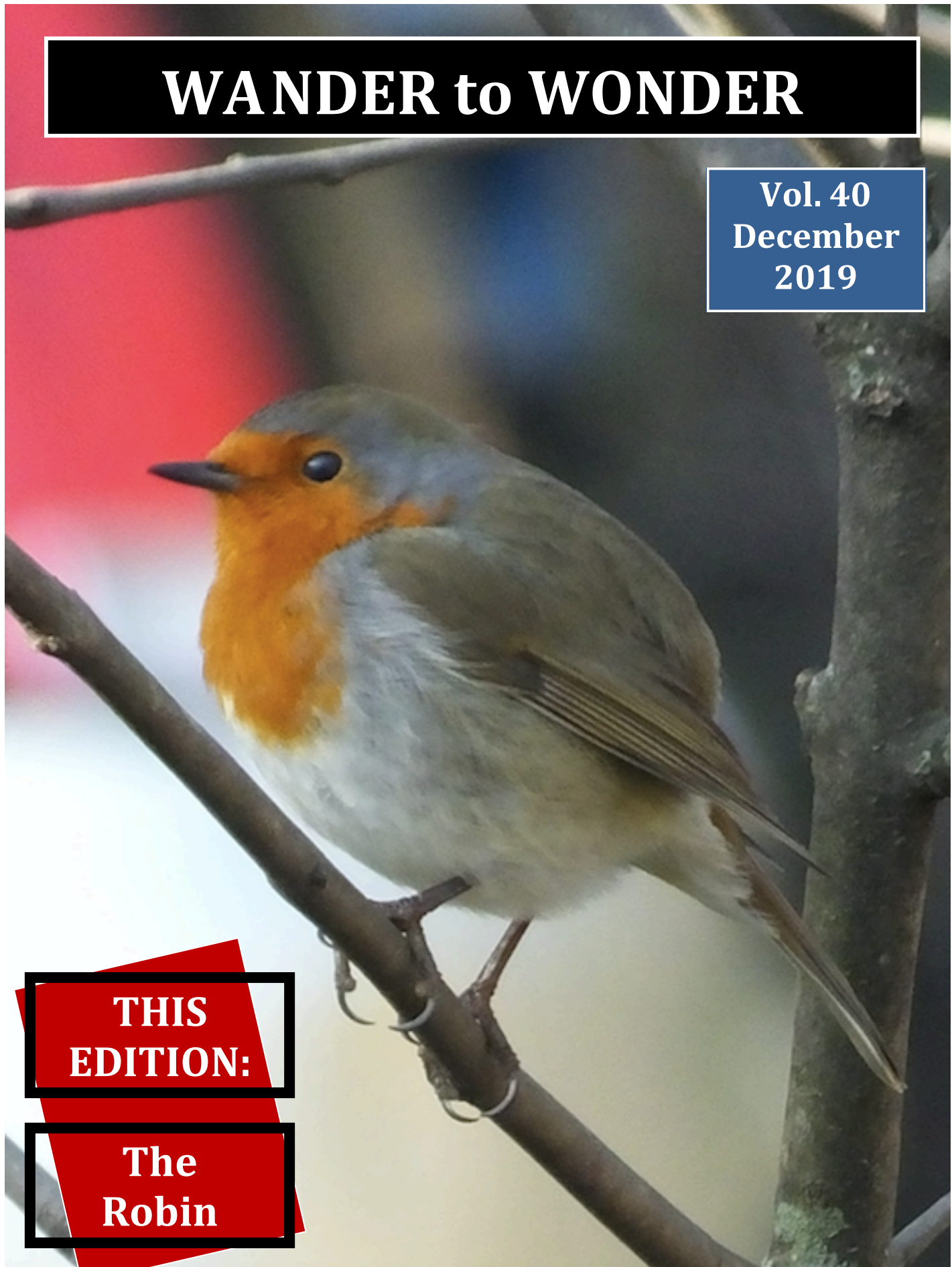


WANDER to WONDER

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**THIS
EDITION:**

**The
Robin**



WANDER to WONDER

by MARTINA NICOLLS



**The world will never starve for wonder, but only for want of wonder.
G.K. Chesterson**

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editor's note

Welcome to the 40th edition of WANDER to WONDER

This edition of Wander to Wonder focuses the Robin – a symbol of the festive season in the northern Hemisphere – and a beautiful friendly, sociable song bird.

Until next edition, with another theme,

Martina

MARTINA NICOLLS



red robin

The Red Robin is the common name for the European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*). It is also called Robin Redbreast. It is a small passerine (perching bird) in the chat family.

The European Robin is grey-brown with a distinctive orange-red breast and face, with a white belly. Its legs and feet are brown. It has an olive-brown head, wings, and tail. Its beak and eyes are black. The male and female are similar in appearances.

It grows to about 12 centimetres (5 inches) tall, with a wingspan of 20-23 centimetres (8-9 inches).

The Red Robin is common throughout Europe and northern Africa. It prefers forests and woods, but also parks and gardens.

It is diurnal, active during the day. It is insectivorous, eating insects, such as bugs, but it also eats earthworms.

The European Robin nests in a variety of places, such as cracks in buildings, in flower pots and even in people's hats. Females lay 2-3 cream-coloured eggs with reddish-brown specks. The chicks are initially spotty before they grow their adult feathers.





the secret

by Anonymous

We have a secret, just we three,
The robin, and I, and the sweet cherry-tree;
The bird told the tree, and the tree told me,
And nobody knows it but just us three.

But, of course, the robin knows it best,
Because she built the—I shan't tell the rest;
And laid the four little—something in it—
I'm afraid I shall tell it every minute.

But if the tree and the robin don't peep,
I'll try my best the secret to keep;
Though I know when the little birds fly about
Then the whole secret will be out.





robins like bird feeders

Bird feeders are containers filled with birdseed and placed in gardens and on balconies to attract wild birds. A May 2019 British study, in the *Nature Communications* journal, found that putting bird feeders in the garden helps the growth of bird populations.

The study assessed the advantages, disadvantages and impact of bird feeders in people's gardens over the past 40 years. The researcher, Kate Plummer of the British Trust for Ornithology, and a team of volunteers, have been monitoring the species of birds that feed on seeds and fruit from bird feeders across England since the 1970s. The 40-year data shows that about 68 species of birds have always used the bird feeders from the 1970s to the present day. Not only do bird species keep going back to the bird feeder over many years, but also larger numbers of the same species, and different species of birds, join them. For example, 10% of volunteers saw wood pigeons at their garden bird feeders in the 1970s and now 80% of volunteers see wood pigeons coming to their bird feeders.

Regular birds at the bird feeders include robins and blackbirds. Additionally, different species join the regular birds, which improves the biodiversity of the garden.

In cities and towns, the size of bird populations in the areas around the volunteers' gardens has increased for the species of birds that use the feeders, and the populations have not increased for the species of birds that do not use the feeders. This is why researchers think that feeding from the bird feeders is the reason for the increases in bird populations in the area.











pekin robin

The Pekin Robin (*Leiothrix lutea*) is not related to the European Robin, so it is not a true “Robin.” It is also known as the Red-Billed Leiothrix. It is a passerine (perching bird) in the Timaliide family of babblers. It is a soft-billed bird.

The Pekin Robin is olive-green on its back, with a bright orange-yellow throat and a yellow chin. It has a bright red beak and a yellow eye-ring. Its cheeks and neck are bluish-grey. The edges of its wing feathers are yellow, orange, red and black. Its tail is olive-brown and forked. The female is duller in colour than the male.

It measures about 15 centimetres (6 inches) tall.

The Pekin Robin is native to southern China and the Himalayas, in countries such as India, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Tibet. This Pekin Robin was photographed at the London Zoo. It prefers open habitats and forests. It feeds on fruit, seeds, and vegetation. The Pekin Robin lives in a group of about 10-30 individuals. Its nest is cup-shaped and made of dry leaves. The female lays 2-4 eggs, which hatch after 12 days.







robin on the lawn

by Lucie Gray

I saw a robin on the lawn,
when I got up one spring time dawn.
She pulled a worm then flew away.
It really, really made my day.





words by frances burnett

“The robin flew from his swinging spray of ivy on to the top of the wall and he opened his beak and sang a loud, lovely trill, merely to show off. Nothing in the world is quite as adorably lovely as a robin when he shows off - and they are nearly always doing it.”

— **Frances Hodgson Burnett** —THE SECRET GARDEN



oriental magpie-robin

The Oriental Magpie-Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) is a small **passerine bird**. It is not related to the European Robin. It is related to the Flycatcher.

The Oriental Magpie-Robin is black and white with an upright long tail. The male has black upperparts, black head and black throat, with a white shoulder patch. Its underparts and the sides of the long tail are white. The female has greyish-black upperparts and greyish white chest.

It measures about 19 centimetres (7.5 inches) tall.

The Oriental Magpie-Robin is native to India and south-east Asia, in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, south China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It prefers tropical forests, open woodlands, and gardens near human habitats.

It is mostly seen on the ground, and not in trees. It forages amongst leaf litter on the ground for food. It eats insects, larvae, caterpillars, flower nectar, lizards, leeches, centipedes and small fish.

It nests in tree hollows or niches in walls or building. The female makes a nest lined with grass. She lays 4-5 eggs, which hatch after 8-14 days. Only the female sits on the eggs. The female mainly feeds the chicks.







the author: Martina Nicolls

I am an author and humanitarian aid consultant with over 30 years' experience in the management, implementation, and evaluation of international aid development projects, particularly in post-conflict environments and countries with transitional governments, such as Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Darfur, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq, Liberia, Georgia, Kosovo, and Sri Lanka, and also Mauritius, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia – and others. I provide technical advice on areas such as peace-building and conflict mitigation, education, poverty reduction, human rights, child labour, human trafficking, monitoring and evaluation, and data quality.

But mostly I am a wanderer. Wherever I am and wherever I go, I take photographs and I write. My books include:

Similar but Different in the Animal Kingdom (2017)
A Mongolian Lament (2015)
The Komodo Verses (2012)

Liberia's Deadeast Ends (2012)
Bardot's Comet (2011)
Kashmir on a Knife-Edge (2010)
The Sudan Curse (2009)

MARTINA NICOLLS

martina@iimetro.com.au

<http://www.martinanicolls.net>

<http://martinasblogs.blogspot.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/Martina-Nicolls-მარტინა-ნიკოლსი-1450496988529988/timeline/>





