

LONG-TAILED TIT

Aegithalos caudatus

permanent resident

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Aegithalidae
Genus: *Aegithalos*
Species: *A. caudatus*

Piřigoj codat RO
Αιγιθαλος GR
Codibugnolo IT
LT
PL
PT

Uzun Kuyruklu Bařtankara TR



Small, length 13-15 cm, tail included (9 cm), wingspan 17-18 cm, having undulated flight, is a compact passerine bird resembling to a tailed ball flying in the air. It is resident in almost entire European continent, except the Northern part and the Mediterranean islands. Generally foraging together in groups of 10-15 individuals, prefers the bushy habitats, with lots of hazelnut trees, hedgerows, old orchards, parks, gardens. The species is monomorphic, the males being a little larger than the females. There are several subspecies, Romania being the country where both varieties intertwine, those with a completely white head and those with a black lateral band on the crest. The beak is short and strong, the eyes like two completely black beads with a yellow portion above the eye, the shoulder area and underparts dusted pink.

Despite its name does not belong to the tit's family, rather belonging to the group that includes warblers, swallows and larks.

The nest is very elaborate, it is made of spider webs, moss and lichen is lined with feathers. It is usually built in places hard to reach for others, hidden between branches. The long tailed tit lays 8-12 sometimes up to 17 eggs which the female incubate during 12-13 days. The space is so narrow that after hatching the female has its tail feathers bent. Not only the two parents but also their relatives, who have not yet formed pairs, participate in feeding the chicks, specially the male's relatives. The young fledge around 18-19 days after hatching.

They are very active, always in movement, always calling each other, emitting a series of at least three different types of calls, very characteristic for the species. When we hear them we can be sure we will see more than one individual, sometimes even 15 birds as they are highly social and we can be sure that their encounter will last no more than one or two minutes. They feed on insects and invertebrates.



Often, after leaving the nest, all the siblings are waiting, aligned on the same branch, for their parents to provide food.



Very hard to catch them on the lens as they are always in movement, moving acrobatically on the branches, sometimes upside down, in their quest for food.

Did you know that this bird's name in Hungarian translated is something like "the old man of Autumn".

The long-tailed tit is resident but not particularly territorial and generally remain in the same habitat in which they were born, patrolling the area within a maximum radius of 1 km.

The pairs are very protective with each other. They huddle together at night, one bird covering with its wing the other in order to provide extra warmth.

Long-tailed tits are masters of nest building as they are able to enlarge their nest with the growth of their chicks holding in the nest up to 1500 feathers



White headed long-tailed tit (*Aegiathos caudatus caudatus*) specific for the Northern part of the European continent.