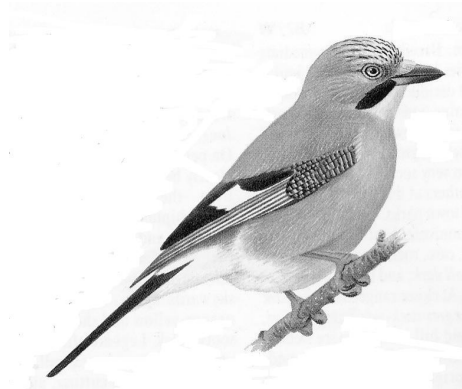


A large pink bird on the lawn

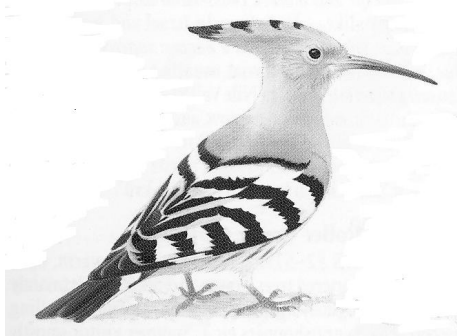
If you see a large pink bird on the lawn there are three possibilities. The first is that you have just had rather too alcoholic a lunch, the second and most likely is that you are looking at a Jay and the third possibility is that you are looking at a Hoopoe.

Jays are not uncommon in the area, which is surprising really as they are typically a bird of woodland, and although we have patches of wood they are not very large. We often get small influxes of Jays in winter but they do also seem to breed here. They can be recognised by their overall pinkish-brown colour, the blue patch on the wing and the white flashes in both wing and rump. They are noisy birds – their harsh screech must rate as one of the least attractive bird calls – and it often draws attention to their presence. Jays are intelligent birds – in the autumn they bury large numbers of acorns and manage to remember where they put most of them! If you see Jays digging in your lawn they are probably retrieving hidden acorns.



Hoopoes are also pink at first sight, but the wings, back and tail are actually striped black and white. In flight they look like a huge black and white butterfly. They have a big pink crest with black and white tips – this is often raised most dramatically on landing – and they have a long, pointed, slightly down-curved bill. But Jays also have a bit of a crest and a floppy round winged flight, with white rump and black tail so the two birds are not quite as different as might appear from the picture in the books.

Hoopoes are scarce but regular visitors in the spring and autumn. Every year there are several birds reported from this area – Martins Haven and the Deer Park have been good sites in recent years. This year, on 10th April, four birds were reported on the lawn at Slate Mill and one seen later close by on the track up to Butterhill. Why were they not on my back lawn I ask?? One lucky local resident has seen three Hoopoes in the last 12 months – but not me! So if you have a Hoopoe on your lawn PLEASE give me a ring – I would love to see one in Pembrokeshire!



Rosemary Royle