



## Comprehension

### Birds

Winter and early summer is the time when birds come closest to our houses. Even in the hardest weather they are about. It seems surprising that so small a creature as a robin or a tit can stand the snow and ice of winter.

Birds are, like us, warm-blooded. They are able to raise the temperature of their bodies above that of the surrounding atmosphere. In fact, the temperature of most birds is several degrees above that of man and other mammals. The feathers of a bird provide first-class insulation and keep in the heat of its body, like a warm overcoat.

But while a bird can put up with the cold, it must have food to keep up the activities of its body. Many of the smaller birds that are with us all the year round—such as robins, tits, wrens, hedge sparrows—feed largely on insects and similar small

creatures. During the winter there are very few insects about, consequently the normal food supplies of such birds are very much reduced. Frost and ice put what little insect food there is in winter completely out of a bird's reach. Worms go deeper down into the earth, and slugs and snails are hidden away hibernating.

from **Birds in the Garden** by Paxton Chadwick