

Right in Your Backyard - Germany's *Bird of the Year 2025* - The Black Redstart

NABU* + LBV,** two nature conservation organizations, provide citizens in Germany with the opportunity to vote for the ‚Bird of the Year‘. This activity dates back to 1971. At that time in Baden-Württemberg, a ‚Land‘ in southwest Germany, the number of Peregrine Falcons had dropped severely. More than half of the overall number of Peregrine Falcons bred and raised their young in this part of the country. A rescue program was launched and Peregrine Falcon numbers rebounded. Bird enthusiasts helped create new breeding sites in church towers and other tall buildings. This example demonstrates how volunteers can be recruited to assist in rescue programs. Furthermore, it shows how local residents connected with a vulnerable bird.

With the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 it became more urgent to communicate to the general public the concerns for the environment that scientists had expressed in the Paris agreement. At our own backdoor we were only beginning to understand the loss of birdlife. In its first few years the experts on the nominating committee of the ‚Bird of the Year Campaign‘ focussed their attention on birds at risk. From 1992 on, however, common birds, such as the Robin or the House Sparrow, have been included as options. By doing so, they reached out to more citizens. Around 2020 the nominating committee recommended turning the final decision over to the general public. In 2025 around 143,000 citizens participated and voted for the Black Redstart.

Basic First-Aid Steps to Help the Black Redstart Feel at Home

1. Help improve insect populations by allowing backyards to grow on their own
2. Install nest boxes
3. Encourage city authorities to plant bird-friendly flowers and shrubs in community parks and niche spaces
4. Book the 90-minute habitat game at the DA-I.

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**LBV: Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern. Landesgeschäftsstelle, Eisvogelweg 1, 91161 Hilpoltstein

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