



Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE, UN Messenger of Peace & Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute

*Rotkehlchen / Robin*

The bird I fell in love with first was a robin.

I believe that robins first became important to me when I was a child and we used to feed the birds little crumbs. It was during the war, so there wasn't much to give them.

When I was about 10 years old, I got some weird illness – nobody quite knew what it was. So I was in bed for quite a long time. It was winter and I had my window wide open and a robin used to come right in and perch on my bed. And in the spring, a pair of them made a nest on the top shelf of my bookcase and laid eggs and had babies.

Robins have always been important to me just because they are attractive and I love their song. During COVID, when I was – as I say – grounded in England at home, the house I grew up in, there was a pair of robins which raised their babies.

I sat under my favourite tree and the robins came every single day with their babies when I had my lunch out there, and I used to take food better for robins than the bread that they used to get when I was a child. So they'd come, take the food and feed the gulping babies. The babies when they first hatch they hop around on the ground. And even when the babies were quite big enough to pick up the food for themselves, the parents still fed them. So it was a very special summer. Also during the pandemic one of the two robins used to come onto my hand.

I would say that at least half of the species that were in the garden when I was growing up are no longer there. It doesn't mean they are totally extinct but they are no longer in our neighbourhood. It's very sad.

If the robin no longer existed the first thing I'd miss would be their song, I think they have a beautiful song. And also they are cheeky little birds and I just love watching them.