

2 January 2015 - Birds

The Eurasian blue tit is found all over the country right up to Narvik in the north. The population is increasing; different sources estimate the number of blue tits in Norway at between 50,000 and 100,000 pairs.

The blue tit (**Cyanistes caeruleus**) is most content in ancient deciduous forest, preferably with tall trees. Here it is easier to find holes in trunks, where they build nests from moss and other soft materials. If you set up a bird box in a deciduous forest, the blue tit is one of the first to come and seek shelter, often competing with the flycatcher.



The blue tit lays eggs in April/May and broods for fourteen days. After a further three weeks the young take their first flight from the nest. This playful and colourful bird stands out from the great tit as it has more blue colour on its wings, crown and tail. The blue tit is a non-migratory bird that generally also stays in Norway for the winter. It does not hoard a winter store of food, so it is a regular guest at bird tables and other feeding places

European crested tit (**Lophophanes cristatus**)

The easily recognisable feathered crest on its head makes it straightforward to distinguish the crested tit from the other tits. The crested tit breeds in coniferous forest areas as far up as the southern part of Namdalen. It is most at home in ancient pine forest or mixed deciduous forest. It is most probably the availability of moss and lichen on the trees that makes it prefer these types of forest. As there is less food to be found there, the crested tit keeps away from newly planted areas. It never breeds in such places.



The crested tit also like bird boxes and often breeds early in April, far earlier than the blue tit. It is estimated that between 50,000 and 200,000 pairs of crested tits breed in Norway, but the population varies from year to year. According to ornithologist Kjell-Ove Hauge, forestry affects living conditions for the crested tit: «The felling of ancient, natural pine forest will leave the species with significantly poorer living conditions.»