Our Blackbirds

In the winter when working in the garden it is usual to be accompanied by blackbirds and a robin who soon twig on that here is a source of easy food and I pose them no threat, they often become so confiding that care has to be taken not to bury them when I am digging as they like to get right in on the action.

With the shut down this spring I had lots of time to watch the birds and observe their activities during the breeding season. The male blackbird who was the friendly one when I was working in the garden took little or no part in the nest building, this task was one for the female and when she was incubating the eggs was seldom seen. The male kept himself busy chasing away rivals and maintaining the territory and as I was at home most of the time he soon found that an easy source of food was to come to our conservatory and be friendly, if the outside door was open he hopped in and soon made himself at home looking for food which I would throw to him. He was very relaxed and if suddenly surprised never panicked or flew towards the windows, he just flew or hopped out of the open door. His life changed when the young hatched and he spent all day feeding the young either natural food or the food I supplied and when the young blackbirds left the nest he went into overdrive. The young were scattered around the garden and he would come into the house for food, fly and feed a chick then fly back straight into the house for more food. Outside the male blackbird would not tolerate another blackbird or a starling at the food and would really defend his territory, but with house sparrows and the robin he was a big softy, never showing them any aggression and they would all feed together, if the blackbird had a big beak full of food the cheeky sparrows would steal any sticking out of his beak and get away with it. The blackbird was always trying to pick up more and more food, often dropping one bit to pick up another bit and when harassed by the sparrows often dropped the lot and lost all of it. When he flew away to feed the chicks hidden in the garden 3 or 4 sparrows would fly with him and no doubt stole a lot of the food destined for his offspring. Soon all 5 young blackbirds started coming to the house for food and it became a bit chaotic as they were fearless, I was concerned that this brood would be far to trusting of humans but I need not have been concerned, as soon as they were weaned all the chicks left home and are just occasionally seen, he is still here, just about finished moulting and when we get a warm sunny day loves to spread his wings out and sun bathe. The female blackbird seldom visited the house and kept a low profile all the time.

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