

The birdie song

Take a flight of fancy with Alan Dart's delightful flock of little knitted birds — blue tits, chaffinches and a robin redbreast



MATERIALS

Each bird will take approximately 15 g of D.K. in appropriate colours; 10 g of washable stuffing; No. 11 (3 mm) knitting needles.

TENSION AND MEASUREMENTS

Worked at a tension of 26 stitches and 36 rows, to 10 x 10 cm, over stocking stitch, using No. 11 (3 mm) needles, each bird will measure approximately 18 cm (7 inches) from top of head to tip of tail.

ABBREVIATIONS

K, knit; p, purl; st, stitch; tog, together; inc, increase (by working twice into same st); dec, decrease (by taking 2 sts tog); ss, stocking st (k on right side and p on wrong side); gst, garter st (k plain on every row).

NOTE

Instructions in square brackets are worked as stated after 2nd bracket.

THE BASIC BIRD

FRONT

Cast on 6 sts and beginning with a k row, ss 4 rows.

Inc row: Inc in each st to end — 12 sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Inc row: [K1, inc] to end — 18 sts. Ss 3 rows.

Inc row: [K2, inc] to end — 24 sts. Ss 15 rows.

Shape neck: Next (dec) row: [K1, k2tog] to end — 16 sts.

Ss 7 rows.

Shape head: Next (inc) row: [K1, inc] to end — 24 sts.

Ss 5 rows.

Leave these 24 sts on a spare needle.

BACK

Cast on 6 sts and beginning with a k row, ss 4 rows.

Inc row: [Inc, k1] to end — 9 sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Inc row: [Inc, k2] to end — 12 sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Inc row: [Inc, k2] to end — 16 sts.

Ss 15 rows.

Shape neck: Next (dec) row: [K2, k2tog] to end — 12 sts.

Ss 13 rows.

Shape top of head: Next (joining) row: Work across sts of back thus: k10, k2tog,

then work across the 24 sts on spare needle thus: k2tog, k22 — 34 sts.

P 1 row.

Dec row: K2, [k2tog, k2] to end — 26 sts.

P 1 row.

Dec row: [K2tog] to end — 13 sts.

Break yarn, leaving an end, thread this through remaining sts, but do not draw up.

WINGS

(worked in one piece)
Cast on 42 sts.

1st row (wrong side): K19, [k2tog] twice, k19 — 40 sts.

2nd row: K18, [k2tog]

twice, k18 — 38 sts.

Continue decreasing

in this way

on every

row, working

1 st less at

beginning and

end of each row for a further 12 rows — 14 sts.

Cast off k wise.

TAIL

Using 2 strands of yarn tog, cast on 12 sts and gst 6 rows.

Cast off k wise.

VARIATIONS

BLUE TIT

Front: 32 rows yellow, 2 rows black, 6 rows white, 1 row black and 1 row white.

Back: 40 rows dark green, 1 row black and 1 row white.

Top of head: 5 rows blue.

Wings and tail: All blue.

ROBIN

Front: 16 rows white and 26 rows red.

Back: 42 rows light brown.

Top of head: 5 rows light brown.

Wings and tail: All light brown.

CHAFFINCH

Front: 40 rows salmon and 2 rows grey.

Back: 32 rows light brown and 10 rows grey.

Top of head: 5 rows grey.

Wings and tail: All dark brown.

For each version

Legs and claws:

With dark brown, cast on 10 sts.

[Cast off 3 sts, then cast on 3 sts] twice.

Cast off remaining 10 sts k wise,

leaving a 70 cm length of yarn.

Beak: With dark brown, cast on 4 sts, then cast off k wise.

TO MAKE UP BLUE TIT AND CHAFFINCH

Join front and back pieces, then short seam on head, leaving top sts on thread open. Run a gathering thread through the sts on the 3rd row above neck shaping row, leaving long ends of yarn.

Stuff the body firmly, draw up gathering thread to shape the neck and tie securely. Stuff head, draw up top sts tightly and fasten off securely.

Embroider a line of chain sts in white, 4 sts in from each row-end on wings. Gather both row-ends of wings tightly and fasten off. Sew to back 3 rows below neck shaping row, having "V" pointing to tail end.

Sew tail to base of body.

Using a darning needle and length of yarn attached to legs, bind each claw and legs firmly. Pinch claws together at base and bend at right angles to leg, then sew in place with sewing thread. Sew legs to centre of front in line with 3rd inc row, leaving 6 k sts between legs. Sew beak in centre of head 2 rows up from inc row. With black yarn, make a chain st for each eye with a straight st in the centre.

TO MAKE UP ROBIN

Make up as for Blue Tit and Chaffinch, omitting neck gathering thread and wing embroidery.

