

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL
AND
FRIENDS of BALLARD WATER MEADOW

BALLARD MEADOW AND WOODLAND SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

COMMON BIRD CENSUS
2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The Common Bird Census (CBC) is a method of assessing the number and variety of birds present on Ballard Meadow and Woodland, which are dependent upon the site for the most important part of their life-cycle – breeding.

The habitats present on site and the methods used in the Common Bird Census are the same as 2020 and 2021, and are described fully in the reports for those years.

All management work undertaken on the site which may temporarily impact or benefit wildlife in the long-term follows the Management Plan (2020) and is recorded in the Event Records for the site..

2. SURVEY STATISTICS

Table 1

Date	Time	Weather		Note
		Temp (°C)	Wind	
7 Mar	06:40-07:55	1	NE (0-1)	Clear sky. Frost
17 Mar	06:30-07:50	1	Still	Clear sky. Frost
28 Mar	07:15-08:00	5	Still	Clear sky
7 Apr	06:45-07:50	7	W (4-5)	Partly cloudy
19 Apr	06:40-08:00	5	Still	Light cloud cover
28 Apr	06:30-08:00	6	NE (2-3)	Overcast
10 May	06:40-08:00	13	SW (3)	Cloudy, light rain
19 May	06:30-08:00	13	S (0-1)	Cloudy
30 May	06:30-08:00	10	N (0-1)	Cloudy
7 Jun	06:30-07:45	13	Still	Cloudy, drizzle

3. RESULTS

3.1 BREEDING SPECIES PRESENT AND TERRITORIES

By taking the records for an individual species from the weekly visit maps and transferring them to a single species sheet, this begins to build-up a picture of where each species has at least a probable territory and, at best, a likely nest site. For a census to work properly (and be repeated in the same manner by others if necessary) a steady pace around a selected route is required. Rarely therefore, are nests found unless obvious (eg Carrion Crow). Trying to find individual nests would involve too much searching and significant disturbance.

Table 2 shows the number of estimated territories in 2022.

Table 2

Note: The sequence and scientific names in this list follow more recently adopted and accepted convention of listing birds (British Ornithologists' Union 2021). Numbers in parentheses are maxima.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Territories
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	5 (6)
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	18 (19)
Great Spotted Woodpecker*	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	2 (3)
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	1 (2)
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1 (2)
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	2 (3)
Carrion Crow*	<i>Corvus corone</i>	3
Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	4 (5)
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	14 (15)
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	6 (7)
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalus caudatus</i>	2
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collibita</i>	4 (5)
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	5
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	15
Nuthatch*	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	4 (5)
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	2 (3)
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	15 (17)
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	2 (3)
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	15 (17)
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	1
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	10
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	5 (6)
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	3
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	4 (5)

* - denotes nest (seen, bird at nest, entering nest site or young calling in nest)

3.2 NON-BREEDING BIRDS PRESENT ON ONE OR MORE OCCASIONS

These are casual sightings, are regarded as non-breeding on the site and are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	A pair – visit 4
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Single bird – visit 6
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Two over – visit 5
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Calling – visit 1
Treecreeper	<i>Certhis familiaris</i>	Single bird – visit 1
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Single bird – visit 1
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Male calling – visit 1

4. COMMENTS

As in previous years, the results of the Census should be taken as a guide; an approximation of the number of territories. This is the third investigation to determine the breeding bird assemblage on the site, and even with such scant data it is possible, at this relatively early stage, to suggest a number of species as "regular". By comparing these results with those from the previous census', the tables clearly show that around 25 species have territories in each year with 5 species (Woodpigeon, Blue Tit, Wren, Blackbird and Robin) having ten or more possible territories annually so far.

Numbers of territories will vary each year to a greater or lesser degree. Species will also come and go. Many factors are at play, not least weather conditions, availability of nest sites, increased disturbance etc. 2020 and 2021 saw increased visitor pressure as people stayed local as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. In addition, management work, particularly coppicing, will, for a short time, cause birds to vacate an area until the vegetation re-establishes. Each worked compartment will soon close-in and be undisturbed (hopefully) for up to 10 years until re-coppiced. In addition, maintaining open areas in the woodland long-term (the glades) will increase the proportion of non-woody vegetation, flowering plants, invertebrates and therefore a greater amount of available food for birds.

It is, once again, encouraging that there continue to be established territories of birds which are on the list of Birds of Conservation Concern (those species having suffered massive declines nationally as a breeding species in the last 25-30 years). These are Stock Dove, Song Thrush, Starling, House Sparrow and in December 2021, Greenfinch- the latter three in the "Red" category (most highly vulnerable) of the above list.

The route of the CBC 2022 is the same as that shown in the 2020 report.

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Chairman
Friends of Ballard Water Meadow

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www.friendsofballardwatermeadow.co.uk