



Wyre Forest Study Group

WOODCOCK SURVEY IN THE WYRE FOREST AREA

Jim Martin

In 2003 the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) ran a breeding Woodcock survey in UK woodlands. This was based mainly on randomly selected 1km. squares in woodland and six were allocated locally. These were:-

SO 7267	Wissets Wood, Shakenhurst
SO 7471	Non woodland, east of Rock
SO 6975	Sturt Coppice, Mawley
SO 7675	Uncllys, Wyre
SO 7678	Seckley, Wyre
SO 7872	Ribbesford

The procedure was to make one to three visits during May and June, lasting one hour, and starting 15 minutes before sunset. The instruction was to select the best observation point within woodland either at an intersection of rides or in a large clearing giving a good view over a wide area. Records were requested of all Woodcock seen or

heard on their roding flights. Several observers covered these squares but unfortunately all produced nil returns.

Other sites selected by observers were permitted and, on past experience, I also covered SO 7477 on the Elan pipeline south of Earnwood. This was very rewarding and produced between five and nine records per visit. At least two birds were involved and on one occasion a chase took place, presumably at the edge of territories. At other times sightings were made in opposite directions within one or two minutes. Full-recorded details are given in the table.

I suspect that Woodcock occur in more than 20% of squares in the Forest area and have records from Common Bird Censuses (CBC) in earlier years for SO 7476 and 7575. For 2004 I would welcome any casual Woodcock records for the area for comparison with 2003 data. The BTO format for timing and location is a useful guide for maximising the chance of finding them.

Woodcock Observation Details

Date	Time	No. Seen and Heard	No. Heard Only	No. Seen Only	Notes
15-05-03	20.50			1	High to east, going south
15-05-03	20.57		1		
15-05-03	20.59	1			
15-05-03	21.02	1			
15-05-03	21.04	1			Very close overhead, going north - west
15-05-03	21.05	2			Overhead, flying quickly to east, one giving chase
15-05-03	21.09			1	To west, going south
15-05-03	21.12	1			Directly overhead, going north
15-05-03	21.21	1			Again overhead, going south
07-06-03	21.37	1			10m overhead, going north to south
07-06-03	21.42	1			East to west, then turned south
07-06-03	21.47	1			North to south overhead
07-06-03	21.50			1	200m to east, going south
07-06-03	21.52	1			West to east, then south after 200m
16-06-03	21.54	1			Overhead, east to west, bearing south
16-06-03	22.01		1		
16-06-03	22.04	1			East to west, then to north and round to east
16-06-03	22.06		1		Heard to south-west
16-06-03	22.09		1		Heard to north
16-06-03	22.11	1			Overhead, west to east
16-06-03	22.11		1		To north-west as other flew overhead
16-06-03	22.13	1			East to west

County
Site Name
Weather

Shropshire
Elan Pipeline – Wyre Forest, SO 743778
Calm, No rain, Cloud Cover 0-30%