



Wyre Forest Study Group

BIRD SURVEYS IN THE WYRE FOREST IN 2000

Jim Martin

In 2000 I carried out six surveys of birds during the breeding season in the Wyre Forest area. A golf course, several gardens and stretches of water and farmland were included in addition to the woodland and Dowles Brook. Three of the counts were continuations of earlier work by Mike Taylor:

1. Common Bird Census (CBC) of Shelfheld and Lord's Yard started in 1991.
2. Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) of 1km square at Dog Hanging Coppice started in 1997.
3. BBS of 1km square at Long Bank and Rock Coppice started in 1998.

Started in 2000 were:

4. CBC north of Dowles Brook at Wimperhill and Brand Wood.
5. BBS of 1km square at Hawkbatch Valley, Trimpley Reservoir and Eymore Wood.

In addition, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), on behalf of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE), arranged:

6. A single year survey of the 1km square at Sturt Common.

The CBC's are based on the BTO procedures and are reported fully below. The BBS's are organised by the BTO and fully mapped results are returned to them. They consist of counting all birds seen or heard on two parallel transects across the 1km square on two occasions in the early (April to mid-May) and late (mid-May to June) breeding seasons. The ITE work is similar but uses four 1km transects. Results for the BBS and ITE counts have been tabulated and separate reports are available from J. Martin on request.

In general the counts recorded 45-48 species in each area of which around 35 were assumed to be breeding. A total of 76 species were observed in all the visits of which the five most common were Chaffinch, Wren, Robin, Blackbird and Woodpigeon. Blue, Great and Coal Tits, along with Treecreeper, were all down in numbers compared to recent years while Song Thrush, Willow Warbler and Tree Pipit were up. Records for Redstart, Pied Flycatcher and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker were less than I expected. There were no records for the following species listed in this area in the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire, Hawfinch, Crossbill, Siskin or Tree Sparrow. A single sighting of Redpoll was noted just outside one of the covered areas.

It is hoped similar records can be collected in future years.

I acknowledge the help given by Mike Taylor who copied all his past records to me and demonstrated his counting methods before he left for East Anglia.

Common Bird Census: North Side of Dowles Brook, April-June 2000

Eight visits were made (seven early morning, one evening). All sightings and singing birds were registered on Forestry Commission maps. These were then analysed by replotting on species maps and territories defined as 3+ registrations (ie BTO/CBC method).

Using this procedure the following number of territories were mapped:

Wren 25, Robin 25, Chaffinch 20, Woodpigeon 18, Blackbird 16, Song Thrush 15, Coal Tit 14, Blackcap 11, Chiffchaff 9, Willow Warbler 9, Tree Pipit 6, Blue tit 5, Great Tit 5.

Species with three recorded territories were:

Garden Warbler, Longtailed Tit, Carrion Crow, Wood Warbler, Mistle Thrush and Mallard.

Species with two territories:

Woodcock, Pheasant, Stock Dove, Dunnoek, Magpie, Jay, Goldcrest, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Cuckoo.

Single territories:

Grey Wagtail, Nuthatch, Green Woodpecker, Yellowhammer and Dipper.

Species seen less than three times but probably nesting in the area:

Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Treecreeper, Bullfinch, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Raven and Goshawk.

Overflying species:

Heron, Jackdaw, Starling, Swift and Swallow.

46 species in all were recorded of which 33 are assumed as confirmed breeding and a further 8 as possible breeders, (Raven and Goshawk certainly bred close by). Of the overflyers neither Starling nor Jackdaw showed evidence of breeding in the census area.

It is hoped to repeat this census in future years.



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Common Bird Census: Shelfheld/Lord's Yard Transect, April–June 2000

For this plot I followed the figure-of-eight route and method defined by Mike Taylor for his study, which ran from 1991–1999. Eight visits were made (seven early morning, one evening). All sightings and singing birds were registered on the special maps supplied. At completion the results were analysed by transferring them to the nine species maps using a different colour for each species. Territories were then defined as 3+ registrations (ie BTO/CBC method). One map was used to record all species with less than three registrations, including overflying birds.

Using this procedure the following number of territories were mapped:

Wren 31, Robin 27, Chaffinch 15, Willow Warbler 15, Blackbird 14, Woodpigeon 10, Song Thrush 9, Blue Tit 9, Great Spotted Woodpecker 9, Chiffchaff 8, Great Tit 8, Tree Pipit 8, Blackcap 8, Coal Tit 6, Garden Warbler 6, Nuthatch 5, Carrion Crow 5, Redstart 3, Pheasant 3, Mistle Thrush 3, Long Tailed Tit 3.

Species with two territories:

Green Woodpecker, Magpie, Treecreeper, Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Cuckoo, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Jay.

Single territories (estimated, as some had less than three registrations):

Woodcock, Tawny Owl, Raven, Stock Dove, Dunnock, Bullfinch.

Single registrations:

Marsh Tit, Yellowhammer, Buzzard and House Sparrow.

Overflying:

Grey Heron, Mallard, Lesser Blackbacked Gull, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Jackdaw.

46 species in all were recorded of which 35 were assumed as confirmed breeding with a further 4 possible breeders. Of the 7 overfliers only Jackdaw is a candidate breeder.

Compared with M. Taylor's summary these figures are in reasonable agreement with those for recent years for most species. However 5 species were significantly down:

Coal Tit 13* to 6, Great Tit 20* to 8, Blue Tit 34* to 9, Wren 43* to 31, Treecreeper 16* to 2. Song Thrushes were up from 3* to 9, while Tree Pipit and Willow Warbler further increased from the high figures of 1999.

* Average of 1997-1999 figures.

Altering the criteria to either two registrations or maximum number of singing birds would not change these conclusions.

Tree Pipit and Cuckoo



Neville Wilde