

The Birds of Wimbledon Common & Putney Heath 2016



Marsh Tit

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There were 94 species recorded on the Common this year, 45 of which bred or probably bred. As a matter of interest, the overall number of species recorded since records first began in 1974 currently stands at 152, nine of which being flyovers. This has been quite an exciting year on the Common, albeit with the usual ups and downs. There were three outstanding observations, in the form of Marsh Tit, European Bee-eater and Dartford Warbler, with the Marsh Tit providing the first positive evidence of breeding on the Common since 1979. My thanks are due to Jan Wilczur for his help in establishing this record; whilst the European Bee-eater seen and photographed on the 19th May by Magnus Andersson was even more remarkable, it being, according to the last sighting in the London Bird Report of 2007, possibly only the ninth to be recorded in the London area. And, last but not least, was the Dartford Warbler found at Ladies Mile on the 29th September, a bird which remained in the area until at least 19th Dec.; searching for previous records of this rare visitor, it would seem that this may have been the first record since 1938, a pair having bred in 1936. Other notable breeding species this year included the successful breeding of two pairs of Swallows, both nesting in out-buildings at the Windmill complex, one of which produced two broods; meanwhile three Willow Warbler territories were established, this being the best number since 2010, and at least two pair of Reed Buntings held territories. Other observations of note included Brambling, Common Cuckoo, Little Egret, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Pipit, Common Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, Woodcock and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. In addition, there continues to be an enormous number of Common Buzzard sightings, but frustratingly any evidence of breeding remains elusive. Not such good news was the failure of several species to have bred this year; these included the Skylark, Mute Swan and Hobby.



European Bee-eater

The absence of any breeding evidence regarding the Hobby was particularly disappointing, these elegant falcons having hitherto bred with us in every year since 2000; having bred successfully in the Putney Heath area since 2010, a pair duly turned up there again in early May, but it is thought that a series of storms during June dislodged the nest and resulted in their moving elsewhere; it is of course quite possible that they, or another pair, may have bred unnoticed elsewhere in our western woodlands, this being due to insufficient coverage in those areas. Other species causing concern by their absence on the Common in recent years are the Bullfinch, Linnet and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, albeit the latter was seen on a few occasions during the spring this year, but there has been no evidence of this small woodpecker breeding since 2005. There has also been a noticeable reduction in a few previously regular visitors to our ponds, particularly during the past two years, these being the Common Tern, with just one record again this year and, perhaps more alarmingly, not a single record of either Pochard or Gadwall. Meanwhile waterfowl that did breed successfully this year included Mallard, Tufted Duck, Moorhen, Coot and Canada Goose, but there was no evidence to suggest that the Mandarin Duck bred, despite their abundance at some of our ponds during the year, while the Little Grebe, having attempted to breed at Bluegate GP in recent years,

failed to show up there at all this year, which is probably just as well, as much of this pond's water had once again, more or less, evaporated by the end of June.

There were mixed fortunes for our other visiting warblers this year, with the Garden Warbler establishing 21 territories, three more than in 2015, whilst, for reasons not yet clear, those of the Common Whitethroat plummeted from 28 down to just 18, however those of the Blackcap and Chiffchaff appeared to have remained fairly stable. On the whole our woodland species appear to be thriving, perhaps the one exception being the Great Spotted Woodpecker, a bird whose numbers seem to have decreased over the past couple of years, one possible reason perhaps being the loss of ageing silver birch on which they largely depend upon for breeding chambers, such sites not being quite so abundant as was once the case.

Photographs: other than my own. Page 1: European Bee-eater, Magnus Andersson. Page 8: Colin Wills. Rear cover: Kestrel, Peter Haldane.

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Swallow on the Plain

DETAILS OF BIRDS RECORDED ON WIMBLEDON COMMON & PUTNEY HEATH 2016

Observers' initials are shown against records where appropriate – (“mo” for many observers). All references to first-time breeders or to new additions to the Common's list of species relate only to recent history: 1974 to 2016.

Species

Mute Swan

Status: prior to 2007, an irregular visitor to the Common's ponds, but has since bred at Queensmere in five of the past eleven years.

Unfortunately, there was no breeding at Queensmere again this year, although birds were regularly present in ones and twos there throughout the period. Elsewhere, a pair with six cygnets were found at Beverley Brook on the 6th of July (DW), but are thought to have originated from Richmond Park. Later in the year another pair with three well-grown cygnets was at Rushmere on the 6th of December (KV). Single birds were also seen occasionally at Kingsmere where alas one was killed by a dog in October (PH).

Greylag Goose

Status: bred at Kingsmere in each year from 2000 to 2005, but has since become an infrequent visitor.

A flock of 14 flying east over Ladies Mile on the 9th November was the best count of the year, other than that ones and twos were also seen occasionally at Rushmere, Queensmere, Bluegate GP and on the flooded Plain during the spring. (RP, DW).

Canada Goose

3 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident.

There were three breeding pairs during the year, two at Kingsmere and one at Bluegate GP, in all producing 16 goslings. Winter gatherings were rather modest this year to say the least, with just ten at both Rushmere and Kingsmere in March being the best counts (KV, DW).

Egyptian Goose

Status: a regular non-breeding feral visitor.

Regular visitors to our larger ponds during the year, particularly at Rushmere, usually comprising one or two birds, but 7 were present there on 10th March (TG).

Mandarin Duck

Status: feral breeding resident, usually one or two pairs.

There was no positive evidence of breeding received this year, but birds were present in good numbers at some of ponds during the period: 50 at Kingsmere on the 30th October (AS) and 41 there on the 18th of November (JWc), and 20 were at Beverley Brook on 21st January (DWe).

Eurasian Teal

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were just three records this year: Queensmere: one on 4th and two on 6th October (DW). Kingsmere: one present on 20th Dec. (BC).



Teal

Mallard

Status: breeding resident with numbers increasing during the autumn and winter.

Evidence of birds with ducklings during the year came from Scio Pond on 8th April, Bluegate GP on 27th April and 19th May, at Queensmere on 6th May, at Kingsmere on 20th May and at Rushmere on 12th July (DW, PH).

Species

Northern Shoveler

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

Present intermittently at Kingsmere from the beginning of the year until 27th March, with a maximum of 12 on 4th Jan., and from 16th Oct. to the year's end, but in smaller numbers. Elsewhere a drake was at Bluegate GP on 13th April and a duck at Queensmere on 12th and 28th Dec. Later in the year birds were again at Kingsmere during Nov. and Dec. with six being the best count (mo).

Tufted Duck

2 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident (since 2000), winter visitor and passage migrant.

Birds with ducklings this year were found at both Hookhamslade Pond and Bluegate GP, while at Kingsmere, despite two pairs being present, there was no evident of breeding. Meanwhile wintering birds at Queensmere reached a peak of 30+ on several dates in Feb. and Dec. (DW, SR).

Little Grebe

Status: chiefly a passage, but an occasional breeder, water levels at our ponds permitting.

Having bred successfully at Bluegate GP in two of the last three years, it was disappointing that no birds were seen at the pond at all this year, this probably being due to low water levels during the spring. Elsewhere, one was at Queensmere on 5th Feb. and two there on 2nd April (DW).

Cormorant

Status: a regular visitor to our larger ponds, primarily in the winter months.

Birds were present at both Kingsmere and Queensmere during the winter months and, to a lesser extent in the autumn, usually involving twos and threes, but six were present at Kingsmere on 19th Nov. and eight at Queensmere on 22nd Nov. (DW).

Little Egret

Status: scarce visitor, increasingly observed flying over in recent years.

One at Rushmere on 14th July was the only record received this year (JQ).

Grey Heron

Status: regular non-breeding visitor.

A familiar visitor to most of the Common's ponds throughout the year, usually involving single birds, but sometimes occurring in surprising numbers: four at Bluegate GP on 23rd Aug (PH) and five there on 28th Aug. (AE).



Grey Heron

Red Kite

Status: scarce passage migrant, exclusively observed flying over.

All records are given: one over Beverly Meads on 26th March (PC); one over south on 18th April (JWc); one going north above the Causeway on 15th May (AP); and one over the KRR stone on 30th Oct. (AB).

Sparrowhawk

c5 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Fledged young were noted calling at the following woodland sites: west of Bluegate GP on 21st July; at the Exeter House wood on 29th July; Farm Ravine on 6th Aug. and at Lower Gravelly Ride on 9th Aug. (DW).

Common Buzzard

Status: regular migrant and visitor in recent years.

It has now become customary in recent years to receive an enormous number of sightings of this now familiar raptor, this year being no exception (55 records involving 63 birds), but alas any evidence of their breeding still remains elusive (mo).

Species**Kestrel** **at least 5 territories**

Status: breeding resident.

Commonly seen throughout the year in a number of areas on the Common, including fledged juveniles in August, but their nesting sites remained elusive this year.

Hobby

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

As detailed in the introduction, there was alas no evidence of successful breeding this year. Apart from the failed pair in June, other sightings were confined to August and September, during which there were eight records, including one juvenile. However these may well have been migrating birds (DW, SR).

Peregrine Falcon

Status: scarce visitor, usually airborne.

There were just two observations received this year: one over, heading west on 18th April (JWc) and one above the Windmill on 14th Sept. (BC).

Moorhen **14 pairs bred**

Status: breeding resident.

The number of pairs present and thought to have bred this year are as follows: Beverley Brook (4), Bluegate GP (2), Fishponds (1), Hookhamslade (1), Kingsmere (2), Queensmere (2), Scio Pond (1) and Seven Post Pond (1) (mo).

Coot **7 pairs bred**

Status: breeding resident.

Bred at Queensmere (3 pairs); at Bluegate GP (2 pairs) and at Kingsmere (2 pairs) (mo).

Jack Snipe

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Single birds were noted on the Plain on the following dates: 12th Jan., 10th Feb., 28th Feb., 12th March, 28th March, 22nd April and 1st Nov., with two there on 21st March (DW, JW_r).



Moorhen

Common Snipe

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, can be numerous following wet spells of weather.

There were 41 records during the year involving 51 birds, with a maximum of five on 21st March, the majority of sightings coming from the flooded areas at Ladies Mile and on the Plain, the exceptions being one at Bluegate GP on 19th July and one at Rushmere on 24th Oct. (DW, SR, JW_r).

Woodcock

Status: regular passage migrant and winter visitor - can be elusive.

Rather disappointingly there were just two records during the year: one in the Triangle Wood on 4th Jan. and one in the wood between Thatched and White Cottages on 14th March (DW, LH).

Common Sandpiper

Status: scarce passage migrant.

Three at Kingsmere on 5th May were the only record received this year (DW).

Black-headed Gull

Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant.

This is a common visiting gull to our ponds during the winter months, particularly at Queensmere and Rushmere, with a peak count of 78 at the latter on 1st Dec. (DW).

Species**Common Gull**

Status: fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Unlike the previous species, this is a gull that is seldom encountered at our ponds, much preferring to graze on the open spaces of the western playing fields, with a peak of 140 near the Pavilion there on 23rd Feb. (DW).

Lesser Blacked-backed Gull

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were no grounded records this year, but singles were occasionally noted flying over (DW).

Herring Gull

Status: uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly seen flying over.

The only records received this year were of birds flying over, c100 flying east over Beverley Meads on 4th Dec. being the peak count (SRS).

Great black-backed Gull

Status: rare winter visitor and passage migrant, occasionally observed flying over.

Common Tern

Status: non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

This elegant bird has become a scarce visitor during the past few years, and alas there was no improvement this year, with just one sighting of a bird at Rushmere in early June (MB).



Common Tern

Feral Pigeon

Status: fairly common feral resident, confined chiefly in the Common's perimeter.

As in previous years, this familiar town-dwelling pigeon is mostly encountered near or on the Common's perimeter, with a few pairs breeding annually under the Beverley Bridge on the A3.

Stock Dove

c30 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

This hole-nesting dove is a fairly widespread species throughout our woodlands these days, and one that has truly thrived in recent years. Comparatively small flocks were reported on the western playing fields during the year, the exception being 30 there on 15th May (SRS).

Woodpigeon

Status: common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The numbers of this familiar bird continue to be noticeably boosted during the winter months, with c500 ground feeding in the western woods on 23rd Feb. being the best assessment (DW).

Collared Dove

1 territory

Status: scarce breeding resident.

Apart from one calling near Rushmere on 5th April, once again this year the only consistent records received came from what now appears to be a well-established territory at Beverley Meads where a pair is thought to have bred regularly over the years in the area of the Pavilion (SRS, DW).

Ring-necked Parakeet

c30 territories

Status: naturalized breeding resident.

A fairly widespread breeding resident in our woodlands these days, but perhaps one that does not appear to be increasing as rapidly as was once feared.

Species

Common Cuckoo

Status: passage migrant, has become increasingly scarce in recent years.

A poor year, with just a single record: one calling at Ladies Mile on 16th May (DW).

Tawny Owl

c6 pairs present

Status: breeding resident.

There were eighteen records submitted this year, coming from a wide variety of woodland sites, most of which related to birds either found roosting or heard calling, the exceptions being a pair which bred in a nest box south of Queensmere and a pair which are thought to have nested in a regular site near Warren Farm. (AE, GG, PG, TG, LH, PH, SRS, DW).

Common Swift

Status: regular summer visitor, appearing to breed outside of the Common's perimeter.

The first record of the year was of two birds flying south on 28th April (JWc), the last being observed on 23rd Aug. (DW), and the best count being c35 above the Mounds on 19th May (JWc).

Kingfisher

Status: an occasional non-breeding visitor to our ponds and Beverley Brook.

Sightings of this beautiful bird have become much scarcer in recent years, this probably being due to change of location when it comes to choosing a nesting site. A few years ago a pair nested along Beverley Brook, quite close to the Common's perimeter with Richmond Park, which has since been vacated due to disturbance. Nevertheless, there were three records this year: single birds were seen along the brook on 23rd March (DH) and 13th July (PP) and two were found at Hookhamslade Pond on 8th Sept. (BB).



Tawny Owl

European Bee-eater

Status: very rare visitor.

One flying with Swallows above the Windmill complex on 19th May was a new species for the Common's list and indeed somewhat of a rarity in the London area as a whole (MA).

Green Woodpecker

c12 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

There can be little doubt that this woodpecker has noticeably declined on the Common in recent years, and equally little doubt that the presence of so many Ring-necked Parakeets has adversely impacted on their number, the latter being particularly tenacious when it comes to choosing a suitable nesting hole, indeed there exist many a nesting hole that was once used by this woodpecker, that has since been commandeered by parakeets.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

c40 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

This familiar bird continues to be our most abundant and successful breeding woodpecker on the Common, but one that has unfortunately also shown signs of declining in recent years.

Species

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Status: scarce visitor in recent years.

All records are given: one calling in the Green Ride woods on 4th, 29th and 30th of March; one calling and drumming in woods north of the Large Mound on 30th March and 2nd April (DW) and one during the week prior to 23rd April at a feeder in the garden of Thatched Cottage (LH, TG).

Skylark

Status: passage migrant, very occasionally breeding.

A disappointing year inasmuch as there was no breeding on the Plain. There were ten records of birds either on or flying over the area during the year, with five present there on 12th March. (HF, TG, SR, BC, DW).

Sand Martin

Status: scarce passage migrant.

A poor year with just two records involving a few birds heading south on 30th Sept. and one at Rushmere on the same day (DW).

Swallow

2 pairs bred

Status: regular passage migrant, has started to breed in bred again in recent years.

It was another successful breeding year for these recently returning birds to the Common, with two pairs nesting in outbuildings at the Windmill, one of which managed two broods. The first sighting this year came on 14th April, the last being on 13th Oct. (mo).

House Martin

Status: currently a scarce passage migrant, much declined in recent years - last bred in 2004.

This bird continues to be an extremely scarce migrant these days, this after once being a very familiar sight during the year, particularly in the Rushmere area. As with the Sand Martin, reports of migrating birds during the year was very poor, with small parties observed going over on 15th Sept. (AP, KV) and c20 feeding low over the Plain on 17th and 18th Sept. being the only records received (DW).

Tree Pipit

Status: scarce passage migrant, formerly bred but not since 1990.

There was just one record this year: one on the edge of the Plain on 24th Aug. (DW).

Meadow Pipit

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly bred but not since 2003.

Present, primarily on the Plain, from the beginning of the year to 8th April, and later in the year from 6th Aug. to the year's end, with a maximum of c40 on 17th Sept. (DW, SR).

Grey Wagtail

Status: scarce breeding resident and passage migrant.

There was no positive evidence of breeding having occurred during the year, although three juveniles were seen on the Plain on 13th July, but these could have come from elsewhere. Either side of the breeding months birds were regularly noted feeding at several of the Common's ponds (mo).



Meadow Pipit

Pied Wagtail

Status: irregular breeding resident and winter visitor.

As in previous years, birds were frequently encountered in the Rushmere area, but are thought to have bred just outside the Common's perimeter.

Species**Robin**

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Wren

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Duncock

Status: common breeding resident.

Whinchat

Status: regular passage migrant, occurring mainly in the autumn.

There were just four records this year, all coming from the Plain: two on 30th Aug., one on 8th Sept. one on 13th Sept (DW) and one on 30th Sept. (JWr).

European Stonechat

Status: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

This has been a good year for visiting Stonechat with the vast majority of sightings coming on the Plain, plus one or two occurring in the Ladies Mile area. In all there were 45 records involving 60 birds, with maxima of four on two occasions in Oct. Furthermore one obliging bird stayed on the Plain's heather patch until the year's end, the first to do so since 2004 (DW, JWc, BC,PS)



European Stonechat

Northern Wheatear

Status: regular passage migrant.

It was rather a poor year for sightings of this attractive migrant with just six records: one on the Plain on 3rd April, three on 12th April, one on 20th April and one on 23rd Sept. (DW, SRe). Elsewhere one was at Rushmere on 2nd May (AS).

Blackbird

Status: common breeding resident.

Fieldfare

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in some years.

Owing mainly to the comparatively mild temperatures during both winter periods, this has been a very poor year for this wintering thrush, with just two records: one at Bluegate GP on 15th Feb., and two at Beverley Meads on 3rd Feb. (DW, SRS).

Song Thrush

c35 pairs

Status: fairly common breeding resident.

Redwing

Status: regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

Flocks of this regular winter visitor were widespread during the first three months of the year, with a maximum of c80 in the Causeway Scrub area on 10th March. There were noticeably fewer birds during the second winter period, but numbers did build towards the end of the year, peaking with c50 in hollies near Queensmere on 16th Dec. (BC, DW, SW).

Mistle Thrush

c12 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Records during the year suggest that this once familiar breeding thrush continues to decline on the Common (c20 territories in 2012).

Species**Grasshopper Warbler**

Status: scarce passage migrant.

There was just the one record this year, that of a bird on the Mounds on 22nd Sept. (MM).

Blackcap**c70 breeding pairs**

Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.

This familiar songster remains our most abundant breeding summer visitor, taking advantage of suitable areas of scrub, whether they are in open clearings or in our woodland. The first record this year was of a singing bird on the discrete section of Putney Heath on 1st April, the last coming from the Large Mound on 17th Oct. (DW).

Garden Warbler**c21 territories**

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

This has been quite a good year for this warbler, arguably our finest visiting songster, it having established two more territories than in 2015. The first record of the year came from Beverley Meads on 14th April, the last being on 23rd Aug. (DW, SRS).

Lesser Whitethroat

Status: a passage migrant in recent years, formerly more numerous, but has not bred since 2002.

This once regular breeding summer visitor has become increasingly scarce in recent years, this year being no exception, with just a single record of a bird singing near the southern end of Ladies Mile on 19th May (MA).

Common Whitethroat**18 territories**

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Compared with the 28 territories established in 2015 and the 33 in 2014, this year has been somewhat of a disaster for this visiting warbler. The main reason for this seeming to be the absence of any territories having been established in the areas of scrub along the western side of the Common. The first record of the year came on the remarkably early date of 12th March in scrub at the Triangle, not only was it seen but it also sang briefly, the same site producing three birds on 5th April. Later in year the last record was of a bird alarm calling on the Large Mound on 9th Sept. (DW, BC).

Dartford Warbler

Status: rare visitor

Present in the Ladies Mile area from at least 29th Sept to 19th Dec., and although often elusive, was located on 23 occasions by a number of observers during the period. It was not found towards the end of December and may well have finally moved on, but that assumption has proved to be wrong on several previously unrewarded visits to the area. (DW, SW, JWC, AP, BI, BC, PG).



Dartford Warbler

Common Chiffchaff**c40 territories**

Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.

The first arrival this year came on 24th March at Beverley Meads (SRS), the last being heard calling on the Large Mound on 7th Oct. After tumbling in recent years, the number of territories appears to have now stabilized (DW).

Species

Willow Warbler

3 territories

Status: formerly a common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant - much declined over the last two decades.

Three territories may not sound very many, but it is in fact the best number of pairs to have bred since 2010, a year in which there were also three pairs. Unusually, the first record this year came from trees on the perimeter of Queensmere on 2nd April, the last being at Ladies Mile on 29th Aug. (DW).

Goldcrest

c35 territories

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This easily overlooked little bird of our woodlands is in fact more numerous than one might imagine. Once learnt, it is made easier to identify by its faint but distinctive song during the spring. The present breeding population appears to have remained stable in recent years at about 35 pairs, which may in reality be a rather conservative estimation (DW). Notably more numerous in the winter months, with a group of at least ten being found in the western woods on 6th Jan.(PH).



Goldcrest

Firecrest

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

All records are given: one on 17th Jan. near Queensmere (DJ per LBC); one in the garden at Thatched Cottage on 1st Feb. (TG); one at Jerry's Hill on 3rd Feb. (PC); one singing in the Wildcroft Rd woods on 4th May (DW); one at Jerry's Hill on 21st Oct. (DW) and one in hawthorn overhanging Beverley Brook on 25th Oct. (CT).

Spotted Flycatcher

Status: passage migrant, becoming scarce.

Two records: both from the Wildcroft Rd area, singles on 2nd May and 1st Oct. (DW).

Long-tailed Tit

c60 pairs

Status: common breeding resident.

The first pair seen nest building this year came on 3rd March. Numbers appear to be stable, but, however well hidden, a large number of nests continue to be predated. Flocks were frequently encountered during the winter months, with c45 moving through the Parkside woods on 7th Nov. being the highest count (DW).

Marsh Tit

Status: scarce visitor, the last positive evidence of breeding being in 1979.

The first indication that Marsh Tits were present came on 4th April with the sighting of a single bird in a wooded area on Putney Heath, two days later birds were seen removing wood chippings from a cavity behind the loose bark of a dead oak. This activity continued until 11th April whereupon birds were then seen taking in nesting material. Over the following month visits by the birds carrying food were initially slow, but worryingly continued to be so and were certainly not in accordance with the nest being full of young, at which point it became evident that something was not quite right. The last action observed was of a bird entering the site on 26th May, some 51 days after its discovery. On inspecting the nest site later in June, it was found to still contain six eggs and the remnant shells of two or three others, the problem appearing to be the nest itself, which was some 14 centimetres in length but only 4 centimetres in width, thus making it impossible to turn and incubate all of the eggs sufficiently. However, it is hoped that at least two or three youngsters fledged successfully (DW, JWc).

Species

Blue Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Great Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Coal Tit

c40 territories

Status: breeding resident.

Nuthatch

c30 territories

Status: breeding resident.

The breeding population of this tree dweller would appear to be healthy throughout our woodlands (DW).

Treecreeper

at least 24 territories

Status: breeding resident.

Unless one is familiar with a Treecreeper's sweet but somewhat abrupt song, this elusive woodland dweller can often go undetected; as a result the number of territories mapped each year should be regarded as being somewhat conservative (DW).

Jay

c20 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

This, the most colourful of the corvids, remains a familiar breeding bird with us, and one which uses a variety of habitats on the Common in which to nest, but is also a bird that can sometimes prove elusive, with their whereabouts, particularly in woodland, being more often betrayed by their raucous calls. It is estimated that the Common currently supports some 20 to 25 pairs.

Magpie

Status: breeding resident.

Several pairs were noted nest building in early March, although the number of pairs on the Common has not been estimated for several years now. Groups of eight were noted of the western playing fields on 26th July and 25th Aug. (SRS) while 16 were counted in trees on the Large Mound on 5th Dec. (DW).

Jackdaw

Status: common resident and occasional breeder.

The Jackdaw is more often seen flying over the Common these days, sometimes in their hundreds, 234 flying SSE on 18th April being a good example (JWc). A few do join Crows feeding on the Plain during the spring, but there has been no evidence of pairs breeding since 2012.

Carrion Crow

Status: breeding resident.

This is a common breeding resident, often gathering in large pre-roosting numbers on the Plain during the winter months.

Starling

Status: scarce breeding resident.

A few pairs bred at the Windmill complex this year, either using suitable holes in buildings there or taking advantage of the bird boxes designed for Swifts, but it would appear that this species no longer breeds anymore in our woodlands, as once was the case. C30 ground-feeding near the log pile on 25th Aug. were largely made up of juveniles (DW, PH).



Species**House Sparrow**

Status: scarce breeding resident.

The status of the House Sparrow on the Common has remained very much the same over the past few years or so, with small pockets of birds breeding on its perimeter at The Green, Wimbledon, and, further west, at Vale Crescent and at the foot of Stag Lane. Once again there were no reports of birds being seen at the Windmill during the year, indeed one has to go back to 2011 to find the last record of birds being present there.

Chaffinch**c30 pairs**

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Little information was gathered during the year regarding this fairly common breeding finch. Territories were last counted in 2013 when 35 pairs were estimated, since when it would appear that the population has remained stable.

Brambling

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There was just the one record this year, involving two or three birds on the Large Mound on 18th Oct, (TD).

Greenfinch**c20 pairs**

Status: breeding resident.

A breeding resident but localised, preferring habitats such as those found in the gardens and hedges adjacent to the various staff cottages on the Common (DW).

Goldfinch

Status: scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A few pairs bred in the foliage available at the Windmill complex this year, but this colourful finch is more likely to be encountered during the months of autumn and winter when foraging flocks visit sites offering a plentiful supply of seeds, such as those at the Large Mound and Causeway Scrub areas, with the year's best count of c50 coming at the latter on 15th Feb. (DW).

Siskin

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

All records this year came during the first winter period, with small parties often encountered feeding on alders at Queensmere on several dates in Jan. and Feb.; c30 were in the Parkside woods on 26th March; ten were counted at the Causeway Scrub on 21st March and a few birds were seen to visit a feeder at Thatched Cottage during April (DW, AP, TG).

Lesser Redpoll

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

All sightings this year consisted on small parties foraging during the winter months, with records coming from a variety of sites, but being in the main from Warren Farm, Ladies Mile and the Mounds (DW, JWc, SW, SRS, AP).

Reed Bunting**2 territories**

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, occasionally breeds.

There were two territories established this year, one at Ladies Mile and one at the Cabbage Patch north of the Windmill. Birds were reported in varying numbers during the winter months, particularly in the Ladies Mile area, with a peak count of c25 there on 31st Dec. (MH, SR, SW, JWc, DW).

Total Species	94	(96 in 2015)
Bred or probably bred	46	(45 in 2015)

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS RECORDED ON THE COMMON/HEATH DURING 2016

* -Indicates bred or probably bred

f -Species observed only flying over

Mute Swan	Feral Pigeon*	Mistle Thrush*
Greylag Goose	Stock Dove*	Common Whitethroat*
Canada Goose*	Woodpigeon*	Lesser Whitethroat
Egyptian Goose	Collared Dove*	Garden Warbler*
Mandarin Duck	Ring-necked Parakeet*	Grasshopper Warbler
Mallard*	Cuckoo	Dartford Warbler
Shoveler	Tawny Owl*	Blackcap*
Teal	Common Swift	Common Chiffchaff*
Tufted Duck*	Kingfisher	Willow Warbler*
Little Grebe	European Bee-eater <i>f</i>	Goldcrest*
Cormorant	Green Woodpecker*	Firecrest
Little Egret	Great Spotted Woodpecker*	Spotted Flycatcher
Grey Heron	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Long-tailed Tit*
Red Kite <i>f</i>	Skylark*	Blue Tit*
Sparrowhawk*	Sand Martin <i>f</i>	Great Tit*
Common Buzzard	Swallow*	Coal Tit*
Kestrel*	House Martin <i>f</i>	Marsh Tit*
Hobby	Meadow Pipit	Nuthatch*
Peregrine Falcon <i>f</i>	Tree Pipit	Treecreeper*
Moorhen*	Grey Wagtail	Jay*
Coot*	Pied Wagtail	Magpie*
Common Snipe	Wren*	Jackdaw*
Jack Snipe	Duncock*	Carrion Crow*
Woodcock	Robin*	Starling*
Common Sandpiper	Whinchat	House Sparrow*
Black-headed Gull	European Stonechat	Chaffinch*
Common Gull	Northern Wheatear	Brambling
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>f</i>	Blackbird*	Greenfinch*
Herring Gull <i>f</i>	Fieldfare	Goldfinch*
Great Black-backed Gull <i>f</i>	Song Thrush*	Siskin
Common Tern	Redwing	Lesser Redpoll
		Reed Bunting*

Additions compared with the 2015 list are: Teal, Tree Pipit, Grasshopper Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher and European Bee-eater. Absentees were Whooper Swan, Common Pochard, Pheasant, Short-eared Owl, Yellow Wagtail, Linnet, Common Crossbill and Snow Bunting.



Long-tailed Tit

The following lists shows the number of species recorded each year on the Common/Heath since 1974, and the number of them that bred or probably bred (in brackets). However, it should be emphasised that the total recorded in any given year may reflect the amount of coverage during that year rather than any significant changes in the number of species occurring.

Number of species recorded

1974 (86), 1975 (86), 1976 (86), 1977 (82), 1978 (88), 1979 (84), 1980 (83), 1981 (77), 1982 (82)
 1983 (82), 1984 (83), 1985 (90), 1986 (89), 1987 (88), 1988 (86), 1989 (78), 1990 (74), 1991 (71)
 1992 (68), 1993 (74), 1994 (77), 1995 (89), 1996 (77), 1997 (85), 1998 (87), 1999 (87), 2000 (81)
 2001 (96), 2002 (91), 2003 (96), 2004 (92), 2005 (95), 2006 (95), 2007 (99), 2008 (91), 2009 (96)
 2010 (102), 2011 (104), 2012 (103), 2013 (96), 2014 (91), 2015 (96), 2016 (94).

Number that bred or probably bred

1974 (51), 1975 (49), 1976 (48), 1977 (49), 1978 (51), 1979 (50), 1980 (50), 1981 (45), 1982 (49)
 1983 (50), 1984 (49), 1985 (51), 1986 (49), 1987 (51), 1988 (49), 1989 (48), 1990 (48), 1991 (45)
 1992 (45), 1993 (41), 1994 (42), 1995 (42), 1996 (41), 1997 (39), 1998 (45), 1999 (44), 2000 (47)
 2001 (48), 2002 (46), 2003 (50), 2004 (48), 2005 (48), 2006 (49), 2007 (49), 2008 (47), 2009 (46)
 2010 (44), 2011 (43), 2012 (44), 2013 (46), 2014 (47), 2015 (45), 2016 (43).

Coordinators of bird records since 1974

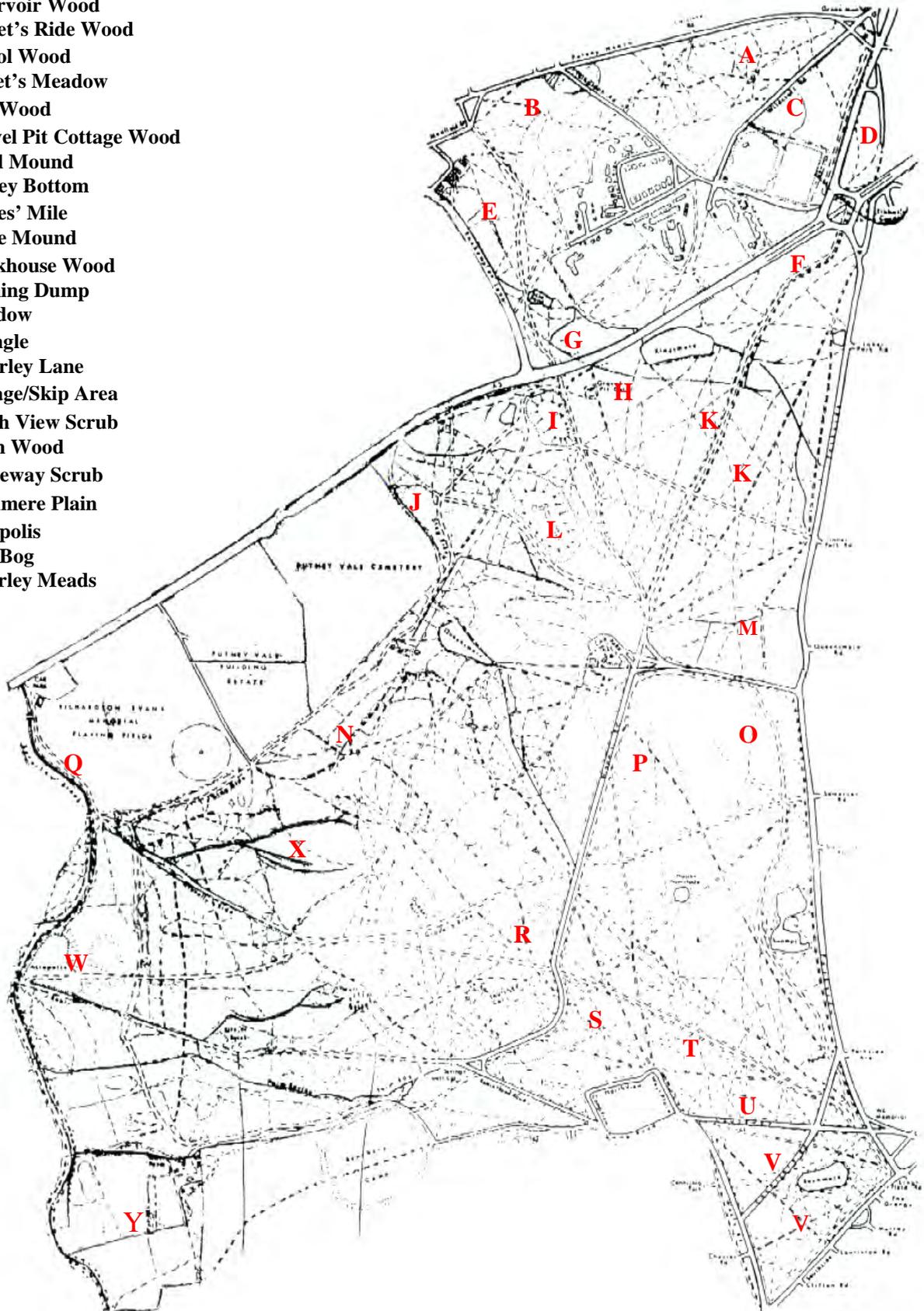
E. D. McMillan	1974-1982
D. L. Wills	1983-1990
R. H. Kettle	1991-1997
D. L. Wills	1998-2016



Firecrest

A GUIDE TO FORMER, OR IMPROVISED, PLACE NAMES USED IN THIS REPORT

- A** Exeter House Wood
- B** Church Wood
- C** Reservoir Wood
- D** Tibbet's Ride Wood
- E** School Wood
- F** Tibbet's Meadow
- G** Scio Wood
- H** Gravel Pit Cottage Wood
- I** Small Mound
- J** Putney Bottom
- K** Ladies' Mile
- L** Large Mound
- M** Clockhouse Wood
- N** Burning Dump
- O** Meadow
- P** Triangle
- Q** Beverley Lane
- R** Storage/Skip Area
- S** North View Scrub
- T** South Wood
- U** Causeway Scrub
- V** Rushmere Plain
- W** Acropolis
- X** Stag Bog
- Y** Beverley Meads





Kestrel at Bluegate GP