

The Birds of Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath 2014



Juvenile Swallows in a stable at the Windmill

The Birds of Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath 2014

In contrast to the previous year's bitterly cold start, 2014 was comparatively mild, but exceptionally wet, in fact the wettest on record in the south of England, but so far as the Common's birdlife was concerned the prevailing conditions proved beneficial to a number of species, not least to the Woodcock and visiting Snipe, with both Common and Jack Snipe showing well. In addition, adequate water levels at our ponds ensured good numbers of waterfowl this year, particularly at Bluegate GP where six species bred successfully, including two pairs of Little Grebes. Furthermore this particular pond, often prone to drying up quickly, actually sustained its water throughout July this year thus enabling a much high level of productivity. The only disappointment concerning our waterfowl during the year was the failure of our Mute Swans to breed at Queensmere; after breeding so successfully in recent years, both adults had to be taken into care following a dog attack on the pen. Other disappointments included the absence of a few hitherto regular visitors in the form of Common Tern, Lesser Whitethroat and Spotted Flycatcher.

Elsewhere, it is pleasing to report that following last year's extremely cold start to the year and the subsequent drastic decline in the number of breeding warbler, there was a noticeable improvement in 2014, with the Common Whitethroat, Garden Warbler and Chiffchaff once again all present in good numbers. Good news too from our woodlands where most species continue to prosper, including the successful breeding of a pair of Hobbies, along with record sightings of the Cuckoo, Tawny Owl (pictured right) and Common Buzzard, with the latter surely being a potential breeding bird in the near future; but alas we do appear to have lost, at least for the foreseeable future, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Bullfinch, both birds which have now become extremely scarce anywhere so close to the centre of London. Another of the year's highlights was undoubtedly the successful breeding of a pair of Swallows in a stable at the Windmill, the first to do so since 1982, furthermore they managed two broods! And, whilst the situation regarding our ground-nesting birds remains a concern, there was a slight improvement this year with both the Willow Warbler and Reed Bunting establishing single territories. Efforts continue to encourage the return of the Skylark to the Plain, and although a pair was present with the male singing for a few days in April, it was not to be. It would be nice to think that the measures being taken to encourage ground-nesting birds back to the Common will occasionally bear fruit. However, given the level of disturbance these days, we may in the future have to accept that such events will probably prove the exception rather than the rule.



There were 91 species observed during the year, of which 47 bred or probably bred. For a variety of reasons coverage this year has been poor, and this is unfortunately reflected in the comparatively low number recorded. Nevertheless this year's total did include the following species of particular interest: Pheasant, Little Egret, Red Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Jack Snipe, Woodcock, Short-eared Owl, Kingfisher, Tree Pipit, Whinchat, Ring Ouzel, Firecrest and Brambling.

As ever, many thanks are extended to all contributors to this report, a full list of which may be found below. Special thanks are extended to Gay Carr for checking and advising on its content, to Paul Pickering for his Little Egret photograph, Angela Evans for printing and compiling additional copies as needed, and to Peter Haldane and his colleagues at the Ranger's Office for collecting and forwarding records from the public, as well as passing on their own observations.

Contributors to this year's report: Andrew Ailes, Chris Bye, Peter Carlill, Gay Carr, Mark Cook, Eleanor Coulber, Bella Covill, Angela Evans, Mary Evans, Roy and Heather Fenton, Derek Frampton, Tim Gilbert, Mike Goodman, Paula Graystone, Graham Guthrie, Peter Haldane, Frank Hung, David Hunter, Chris Jasper, London Bird Club, Simon Lee, Paul Pickering, Adrian Podmore, John Rowcliffe, Bill Rowland, Robin Searle, Andrew Simon, Simon Rocksborough-Smith, Steve Smith, Tim Straw, Chris Taplin, Kate Veale, Gordon Vincent, John Weir, Jan Wilczur (JWz), David Wills and Steve Woolfendon.



Name clarification: in order to avoid confusion, the extensive area of grassland south east of the Windmill, hitherto known to some as the Meadow but to others as the Plain, will in all future bird reports and updates be referred to as the Plain.

Finally, this year's bird report is dedicated to Ron Kettle who sadly passed away in October. One wonders quite where to begin when it comes to paying tribute to Ron's knowledge of and contribution to the Common's birdlife - not to mention his participation and proficiency elsewhere in the field of ornithology. Those of us of a certain age will of course have fond memories of his enlightening birdsong walks on the Common during the latter decades of the twentieth century. He also took part for many years in the Monthly Standard Walk Counts on the Common, as well as undertaking a Common Bird Census in a woodland plot west of Springwell Cottage from 1973 to 1980. In addition to his informative walks and valuable records over the years, Ron also produced the Common's bird report himself from 1991 to 1997. I count myself one among many who were privileged to have known him and to have benefited greatly from his expertise.



Cormorants at
Kingsmere

DETAILS OF BIRDS RECORDED ON WIMBLEDON COMMON & PUTNEY HEATH 2014

Little Egret

PP

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 2014.

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 eight years.

Of the four cygnets that remained at Queensmere from the 2013 brood, two were taken into care during January, while the remaining two eventually left the pond towards the end of February. Unfortunately thereafter things started to go awry for the adults when the pen decided to lay an egg in woodland close to the pond rather than on their usual platform. There then followed a period during which the pen was both on and off the platform for lengthy spells until eventually it was established that the bird was unwell following a dog attack, which resulted in both adults being taken into care....so alas no cygnets this year. Later in the year single adult birds were seen intermittently at the pond from Sept. onwards (mo).

Greylag Goose

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

An intermittent visitor in small numbers to several of our larger ponds during the spring, with a maximum of five at Queensmere on 25 May. (FH, DW, JW).

Canada Goose

2 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident.

Single pairs bred successfully at Bluegate GP and Kingsmere during the year, producing five and six goslings respectively. The year's best count came at Kingsmere with 20 present on there on 19 April (mo).

Egyptian Goose

Status: a regular non-breeding feral visitor.

Ones and twos were reported at Rushmere and Bluegate GP during the spring. However, the origins of a gosling discovered near the Large Mound on 21 March remain a mystery. Elsewhere, small numbers were occasionally observed flying over during the year, and two were seen ground feeding on the western playing field on several occasions in November, and three were on the Meadow on 29 Nov. (JR, DW, AE, MG).

Mandarin Duck

at least one pair bred

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

Evidence of breeding this year came from Fishponds where a pair with three ducklings was found in late May (SRS). Elsewhere good numbers were recorded at Kingsmere, with maxima of 14 there on 11 Jan. and 19 at Queensmere on 13 Oct. (GC, CT, DW, JW).



Mandarin Ducks

near Kingsmere

Species

Gadwall

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, noticeably scarcer in recent years.

This once familiar visiting duck continues to be somewhat of a rarity these days on the Common, and accordingly there were just the two records this year: one at Bluegate GP on 13 March and a pair at Queensmere on 4 Nov. (DW).

Eurasian Teal

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were just three observations of grounded birds this year: at Bluegate GP where a pair was present on the 19 June, a female on the 21 June, and a drake at Kingsmere on 8 Dec. (DW). In addition six were observed flying low over the Large Mound on the 15 April (JWc)

Mallard

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

Ducks with new broods were recorded at the following ponds: Ravine Pond, on 15th April; Bluegate GP, on 29th April, 21st and 30th June; Queensmere, on 9th May; Rushmere, on 29th June; Kingsmere, on 21st July and 7-Post Pond, on 31st July. The best count of the year came at Queensmere with 40 present on 5 Jan. (ME, GC, DW).

Northern Shoveler

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

Present at Kingsmere from the beginning of year to 30 March, with maxima of 15 on two dates in January. Elsewhere a pair was at Bluegate GP on 31 Jan. and a female there on 27 June; while later in the year three were at Queensmere on 16 Nov., nine were at Kingsmere on 27 Nov. and up to 12 there during much of Dec. (GC, JW, DW, FH).

Common Pochard

Status: normally a winter visitor and passage migrant with a preference for Queensmere, but a pair bred at Bluegate GP in 2013, thus becoming the first to do so since records began in 1974.

Present on numerous occasions at Queensmere from the beginning of the year to mid March, usually involving one or two birds, and again intermittently from 1 Oct. to the year's end (GC, MG, DW, FH).

Tufted Duck

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

Breeding was restricted to Bluegate GP this year, but it is pleasing to report that three pairs bred successfully there, producing thirteen ducklings (DW). The best count of the year came at Kingsmere, where 48 were present on 29 Jan. (GC).



Pheasant

Status: scarce visitor.

The Pheasant is quite a rare visitor to the Common these days, so it is nice to report that there were two sightings this year: one in the garden of Manor Cottage at the Windmill on 5 March (GV), and one near Warren Farm on 28 April (GG).

Little Grebe

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

One of the great pleasures on the Common during the spring is the sight of Bluegate GP full to the brim with water, as was the case this year. Among the six species of breeding waterfowl it attracted, the Little Grebe must surely lay claim to being the most handsome. Following the successful breeding of a pair at the pond last year, two pairs arrived in March this year, and not only did both breed successfully, but both families also safely vacated the pond in early July, thus avoiding the annual drop in water levels! (BC, DW).

Species

Cormorant

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

Visiting numbers were comparatively modest this year, with three at Queensmere on 8 Jan. and three at Kingsmere on several dates in Nov. and Dec. being the highest noted.

Little Egret

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

One at the southern end of Beverley Brook on 1 Jan. was the only record this year (PP).

Grey Heron

Status: regular non-breeding visitor.

The Grey Heron is a familiar site at most of the Common's ponds and Beverley Brook these days, but never in great numbers, three at Kingsmere on 17 March being the year's maximum (GC). Birds were also encountered on several occasions in woodland during the year, well away from water, and presumably seeking amphibians (DW).

Red Kite

Status: scarce passage migrant, exclusively observed flying over.

There were two observations this year: one above Tibbet's Meadow on 4 April (RS) and one over SW on 14 May (JWc)

Sparrowhawk

at least 5 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident.

Reports of recently-fledged juveniles were heard calling this year at the following sites: Scio Pond; Parkside; Jerry's Hill; Farm Ravine and on the discrete section of Putney Heath (DW).

Common Buzzard

Status: regular migrant and visitor in recent years.

Due to the enormous number of records received this year (61 involving 75 birds) it will not be possible to detail them all in this report, suffice to say that the majority of records came from the Beverley Meads/Western Woods areas, and that, frustratingly, any positive evidence of breeding remains elusive (CB, BC, LBC, AE, GG, SL, PP, BR, SRS, TS, CT, JW, JWc, DW).

Kestrel

Status: breeding resident.

There was no nesting sites discovered this year but three juvenile were active on the Meadow from the 2nd July to the 14th (DW) and a juvenile was also noted near the North View woods on 3 June (MC). The striking photograph (right) was captured in 2012.



Kestrels squabbling in the Windmill car park

Hobby

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

One pair bred successfully this year, raising two young. There were reports of further birds being seen elsewhere on the Common but, owing to poor coverage, no further nests were located (DW, JW, JWc).

Species

Peregrine Falcon

Status: scarce airborne visitor.

All records are given: one SW over the western playing fields on 21 Feb. (JWc); one high over the Meadow on 23 March (AE); one circling high above Warren Farm 12 May (JWc) and one above the Windmill on 12 Sept. (DW).

Moorhen

13 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident.

Pairs with broods are as follows: Beverley Brook (4); Bluegate GP (2); Kingsmere (2); Scio Pond (1); Ravine Pond (1); Rushmere (1) Queensmere (1) and Hookhamslade Pond (1). Notably, for the first time in many years, there was no breeding at 7 Post Pond this year (GC, SRS, DW).

Coot

7 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident.

The number of pairs breeding during the year was as follows: Kingsmere (2); Bluegate GP (2); Queensmere (2) and Rushmere (1) (GC, DW, ME).

Jack Snipe

Status: scarce passage migrant.

There were five records this year: single birds were found on the Meadow on 27 Jan., 6 Feb., 6 March and 3 Dec., and one at the Causeway Scrub on 15 Oct. (DW).

Common Snipe

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

With much of the plateau being semi flooded at both ends of the year, it was perhaps no surprise that this secretive wader was frequently encountered, with 28 birds recorded on the Meadow and a further seven at Ladies Mile, the maximum being four together on 7 Dec. (DW).



Woodcock

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

There were eight records this year, all involving single birds at the following sites: Ladies Mile on 6th March, 3rd and 17th Dec.; Hookhamslade on 10th March; Meadow on 15th and 19th March; and at Bluegate GP on 15th and 27th March (DW, TG, AP).

Black-headed Gull

Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Of the many flock counts received during the winter months, c550 on the western playing fields on 6 Jan. proved to be the highest (mo).

Common Gull

Status: fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The huge flock of mixed gulls present on the western playing fields on 6th Jan. also included the best count of this wintering gull, with an estimated 250 present (DW).

Species

Lesser Blacked-backed Gull

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

All records of grounded birds are given: single birds were at Kingsmere on the 1st and 29th Jan., and on the 14th and 19th June; three were on the western playing fields on 6th Jan., with singles there on the 4th and 5th Jan., and one was at Bluegate GP on 15 July (GC, DW, SRS, GG, MG).

Herring Gull

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

There were just two records of grounded birds: four on the westerns playing fields on 6 Jan., and one at Kingsmere on 8 Jan. (DW). The best count of flocks flying over was c100 south over Beverley Meads on 12 June (SRS)

Great Blacked-backed Gull

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

Rock Dove

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

This is a frequent visitor to the Common, usually in small numbers, with a few pairs breeding under the Beverley Bridge on the A3 in most years.

Stock Dove

c30 territories

Status: breeding resident.

The Stock Dove has been one of the success stories on the Common in recent years, with the estimated number of breeding pairs having increased from five in 2007 to c30 in 2014. However, flock counts this year were disappointing with eight on the Meadow on 6 April being the best number received (SRS, DW).

Woodpigeon

Status: common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

This is a familiar breeding bird whose numbers are augmented considerably during the winter months when large numbers may be encountered ground feeding throughout the Common's woodlands. 200 were noted moving SE over Warren Farm on 2 Jan. (SRS).



Collared Dove

Status: scarce breeding resident.

All records of this elusive dove (pictured right) came from the Beverley Meads area this year where birds were seen and heard on numerous occasions, particularly in the vicinity of the pavilion where it is likely that a pair bred. (SRS).

Ring-necked Parakeet

c30 breeding pairs

Status: naturalized breeding resident.

Common Cuckoo

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

In complete contrast to recent years, there were a remarkable 23 records received between 16 May and 21 June of this year, but, perhaps significantly, none involved females thus casting doubts on the possibility of any breeding having taken place (AE, FH, JWc, TG, PH, PG, CT, TS, SL, PP, GC, CJ, EC, AA, SRS, DW).

Species

Tawny Owl

at least 6 breeding pairs

Status: breeding resident.

This often well-hidden, but sometimes very approachable, bird was reported from nine sites during the year, including three juveniles in the woods near North View on 20 May (MC, PG, AE, SRS, GC, GG, TS, PH, DW).

Short-eared Owl

Status: rare passage migrant.

One was flushed and later seen hunting near the Mounds on 15 Oct. (SS).

Common Swift

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

This denizen of the air was regularly recorded between 6 May and 30 July, with a maximum of c40 above the Richardson Evans pavilion 22 July. (JWc, KV, DW).

Kingfisher

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

All records are given: single birds were observed along Beverley Brook on 4 May, 26 June and 19 Aug. (HF, PP) and at Bluegate GP on 10th, 11th, and 16th Aug. and 5 Oct. (SW, DW).



Green Woodpecker

18 breeding pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Not as common as the Great Spotted Woodpecker, but numbers have remained fairly stable over the years: mapped at eighteen sites during the breeding months (DW).

Great Spotted Woodpecker

c50 breeding pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Remains a numerous breeding bird throughout the Common's woodland; 23 nesting holes containing vociferous young being located during May and June, which is probably represents about half of the true number of pairs breeding (DW).

Skylark

Status: passage migrant, having last bred in 2007.

A pair was present on the Meadow, with male singing, from the 15th to the 19th of April, but were not unfortunately heard or seen again thereafter (JWc, DW). A few were also present either side of the breeding months, with maxima of three on two dates in Oct. (AP, DW).

Sand Martin

Status: scarce passage migrant.

All records are given: three NW over the Meadow on 6 May; one low N towards Warren Farm on 12 May (JWc) and a few flying south with House Martins on 26 Sept. (DW).



Species

Swallow

1 pair bred

Status: regular passage migrant.

A pair bred on the Common for the first time since 1982; arriving in May they built a nest in one of the barns at the Windmill where they successfully raised two broods before eventually departing in late August - it will be interesting to see if they return again in 2015. Elsewhere, small numbers of migrating birds were noted in the spring and autumn with a maximum of 150 (in streams) going south on 7 Sept. (DW).

House Martin

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

It proved to be yet another disappointing year for sightings of this once familiar summer visitor, with the only records received being of two flying across the Meadow on 25 May and a few small parties going south in late Sept., early Oct. (JW, DW, DF).

Tree Pipit

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

There was just the one record this year: a single bird was found on the Meadow on 5 Sept. (DW)

Meadow Pipit

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

Present from the beginning of the year until mid April during the first winter period, and, later in the year, from 31 Aug. to the year's end, with a maximum of 20 on 23 Sept. (DW, JW, JWC).

Grey Wagtail

Status: scarce breeding resident and passage migrant.

Observed along Beverley Brook on numerous occasions during the year, but no evidence of breeding was forthcoming. Elsewhere birds were often encountered at our ponds, mainly during the winter months. (mo).

Pied Wagtail

Status: irregular breeding resident and winter visitor.

The Pied Wagtail is one of those birds that is likely to be encountered almost anywhere on the Common, particularly during the winter months. A few pairs once bred annually, but there has been no evidence of this since 2007. By far the best chance of seeing this bird is at Rushmere where juveniles and adults from a nearby breeding site in Wimbledon often gather to feed, with as many as eleven (mostly juveniles) there on 9 Aug. (DW).



Wren

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Dunnock

Status: common breeding resident.

Robin

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Species

Whinchat

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

All records are given: single birds were found on the Meadow on 6th, 12th, and 15th May, 28 July, 18th and 22nd Aug., and 3rd and 21st Sept. (JWc, JW, DW), and at Rushmere on 20 Aug. (DW).

European Stonechat

Status: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

All records came from the Meadow this year: single birds on 5th, and 15th March, two on 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th Sept., singles on 5th and 8th Oct., three on 15 Oct., four on 16 Oct., two on 17 Oct. and singles on the 18th, 19th and 22nd Oct. (AP, JW, DW).

Northern Wheatear

Status: regular passage migrant.

All records are given: Meadow: single birds on 20th and 22nd March, one on 9 April, two on 10 April, one on 13 April, two on 14 April, three on 17 April, one on 24 April, two on 6th and 7th May and two on 14 Aug. Rushmere Plain: one on 6 May and one on 9 Aug. (SRS, AP, JWc, JW, DW).

Ring Ouzel

Status: scarce passage migrant.

One, a female, was found on the Large Mound on 24 Sept. (DW).

Blackbird

Status: common breeding resident.

Fieldfare

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

Records of this stocky thrush were few and far between this year, chiefly because the temperatures during both winter periods remained reasonably high throughout. All records are given: a small group was at Warren Farm on 8 Jan. (KV); c15 at Fishpond Wood on 18 Feb. (JW); one on the Meadow on 14 Oct., 17 flew SW over the Mounds on 27 Oct. and two were at Windmill Ride on 3 Dec. (DW).

Song Thrush **c 40 breeding pairs**

Status: breeding resident.

Following a slight decline in recent years, numbers of this renowned songster now appear to have stabilised somewhat.



Species

Redwing

Status: regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

Birds were widespread in small groups during the first winter period, with the following records comprising the main flocks: c20 on the Large Mound on 5 Jan.; 35 at the Triangle Wood on 15th and 27th Jan., c30 at Ladies Mile on 29 Jan. and c40 in the Green Ride woods on 6 Feb., with the last record of the spring being 12 at Windmill Ride on 31 March. The first record of returning birds came from the Large Mound where three were found 14 Oct. Thereafter visiting birds were few and far between, but small groups eventually began to appear as December progressed and the temperature dropped.

Mistle Thrush

Status: breeding resident.

There was a noticeable shortage of records this year, perhaps indicating a decline in the number of breeding pairs of this thrush on the Common (c20 territories in 2012), but hopefully not. Juveniles were observed ground feeding on the Meadow in late April and early May, but, other than that, the only records received involved small flocks on the western playing fields in August, with a maximum of 12 there on the 19th (SRS).



Garden Warbler with nesting material

Blackcap

c90 territories

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

The first singing bird of the year was heard on 15 March, closely followed by another on the 22nd. Following last year's reduction in the numbers of many of our visiting warblers owing to the cold, the Blackcap, at least for now, appears to have fully recovered.

Garden Warbler

19 territories

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record of the year was of a singing bird at the Causeway Scrub on 21 April (DW). The 18 territories mapped this year came from the following sites: Warren Farm (1), Meadow (2), Tibbet's Corner (1), Causeway Scrub (4), North View Clearing (1), Small Mound (2), Large Mound (2), Springwell Cottage (2), Thatched Cottage (1), Triangle Scrub (1), Windmill Ride (1) and the Skip Area (1) (DW).

Common Whitethroat

33 territories

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

This year's 33 territories came from the following sites: Tibbet's Meadow (2), Windmill (2), Triangle Scrub (2), Large Mound (6), Small Mound (2), Windmill Ride (3), Meadow (3), Farm Bog (1), Causeway Scrub (6), Ladies' Mile (2), North View Clearing (2), Springwell Cottage (1) and Memorial Ride (1) (DW).

The first singing bird of the year was heard at Tibbet's Meadow on 18 April (GC).

Chiffchaff

c45 territories

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

The first singing bird of the year was at Beverley Meads on 2 March (SRS) – over a month earlier than during the cold snap last year. The last was at Ladies' Mile on 4 Nov. (DW). There was a slight improvement in the number of territories established this year (40 in 2013), but not yet quiet up to the c60 of a few years ago.

Species

Willow Warbler

1 territory

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

The first bird of the year was heard singing on the Large Mound on 2 April. Thereafter a further 17 birds were mapped but alas only one paired up and stayed to establish a territory, which at least was one better than last year (GC, JWc, SRS, DW)..

Goldcrest

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Unfortunately, due to lack of coverage this year, no territory estimates were made regarding the Goldcrest, but one supposes their number will not have fallen greatly from the 31 territories in 2013.

Firecrest

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were two records of this elusive little gem during the year: one north of Queensmere on 1 Feb. and one in hollies east of Stag Ride on 28 Oct. (PC).

Long-tailed Tit

c60 breeding pairs

Status: common breeding resident.

This little bird continues to prosper on the Common, which is somewhat surprising considering that of the dozen nests located during the spring, 80% were eventually predated. Nevertheless, later in the year substantial flocks of 40+ were located on 30 July and 31 Aug. (DW).

Blue Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Great Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Coal Tit

c40 territories

Status: breeding resident.

Little information was received this year concerning the Coal Tit, but it remains a fairly common, if sometimes elusive, breeding bird. One was observed carrying nesting material, in the form of a feather, at the Windmill on 19 March (DW).

Nuthatch

at least 24 territories

Status: breeding resident.

The population of this colourful little bird would appear to be stable, with 24 territories being mapped during limited coverage of the Common's woodland (23 in 2013). (DW, SRS, BC).

Treecreeper

Status: breeding resident.

This is a fairly common breeding bird in our woodlands. Territories were not estimated this year, but it established an impressive total of 27 in 2013. (BC, DW).

Jay

Status: breeding resident.



Species

Magpie

Status: breeding resident.

The Magpie remains a fairly common breeding resident, which, if anything, appears to have increased in recent years. Flocks numbering 16 were noted on the Large Mound on 24 Nov. and at Windmill Ride on 17 Dec. (DW).

Jackdaw

Status: common resident and occasional breeder.

There was no evidence of breeding this year, but some of the larger flocks and movements are given: 200 flew SE over Beverley Meads on 20 Jan. and 150 on 1 March (SRS). 100 over SE on 12 May and 105 over SSE on 14 May (JWc) and 250 were feeding on the western playing fields on 19 Nov. (DW).

Carrion Crow

Status: breeding resident.

Pre-roost flocks on the Meadow reached a peak of 800+ on the evening of 22 Jan. (DW).



Magpie

Starling

Status: breeding resident in small numbers.

Very few, if any, Starlings nest in our woodlands these days, as once was the case, but one or two pairs still use the bird boxes and various holes in buildings at the Windmill complex.

House Sparrow

Status: scarce breeding resident.

There were no reports of birds being seen in the area of the Windmill café this year, but the small colonies at The Green, Wimbledon and those at the rear of Vale Crescent and at the foot of Stag Lane appear to be stable.

Chaffinch

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Chaffinch is a fairly widespread breeding resident, with an estimated 35 territories in 2013. During the winter months small parties may be encountered almost anywhere, but the Mounds seem to be one of their favoured haunts, with maximum of c20 there on several dates during the second winter period.

Brambling

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The only record received this year was of one calling on the Large Mound on 21 Jan. (DW).



Brambling on the Mounds

Greenfinch

Status: breeding resident.

Species

Goldfinch

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

Breeds in small numbers but often occurs in quite large flocks during the winter months, as was the case this year, with a maximum of c40 feeding on the Large Mound on 24 Oct. (mo).

Siskin

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

This has been an exceptionally poor year for visiting Siskin, with just one record of five birds on the Small Mound on 5 Jan. (DW).

Linnet

Status: scarce visitor these days. Formerly bred but not since 1987.

Two at Rushmere on 19 Aug. was the only observation received this year (DW).

Lesser Redpoll

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

All records are given: a few in the Triangle Wood on 14th and 16th Jan. Eight at the edge of Fishponds Wood on 16 Jan. and three at Beverley Meads on 16 Feb. (SRS). Three were on the Large Mound on 16 Feb. and flocks of c20 and c30 were at Ladies Mile on 17 Nov. and 6 Dec. respectively. (DW)

Reed Bunting

1 territory

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor.

This year saw the first evidence of breeding on the Common since 2006 when a pair held territory on the Meadow's heather patch during the spring and summer. Later in the year, wintering flocks at Ladies Mile reached a peak of 18 on 24 Nov. (DW).

Total Species	91	(96 in 2013)
Bred or probably bred	47	(44 in 2013)

Stonechat



on the
Meadow

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS RECORDED ON THE COMMON/HEATH DURING 2014

* -Indicates bred or probably bred

f -Species observed only flying over

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

Additions compared with the 2013 list are Short-eared Owl, Ring Ouzel and Linnet. Absentees were Northern Lapwing, Green Sandpiper, Common Tern, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Reed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher and Common Crossbill.



The following list shows the number of species recorded each year on the Common/Heath since 1974, and the number of them that bred or probably bred.

However, it should be emphasised that the total recorded in any given year may reflect the amount of coverage during that year rather any significant changes in the number of species occurring.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>B or pb</u>
1974	86	51
1975	86	49
1976	86	48
1977	82	49
1978	88	51
1979	84	50
1980	83	50
1981	77	45
1982	82	49
1983	82	50
1984	83	49
1985	90	51
1986	89	49
1987	88	51
1988	86	49
1989	78	48
1990	74	48
1991	71	45
1992	68	45
1993	74	41
1994	77	42
1995	89	42
1996	77	41
1997	85	39
1998	87	45
1999	87	44
2000	81	47
2001	96	48
2002	91	46
2003	96	50
2004	92	48
2005	95	48
2006	95	49
2007	99	49
2008	91	47
2009	96	46
2010	102	44
2011	104	43
2012	103	44
2013	96	46
2014	91	47

Yearly averages: Species 87, B or pb 47

The total number of species over the whole period stands at 148, thirteen of which were recorded flying over.

Coordinators of bird records since 1974

E. D. McMillan	1974-1982
D. L. Wills	1983-1990
R. H. Kettle	1991-1997
D. L. Wills	1998-2014

* * * * *

Estimated breeding territories of selected species during 2014

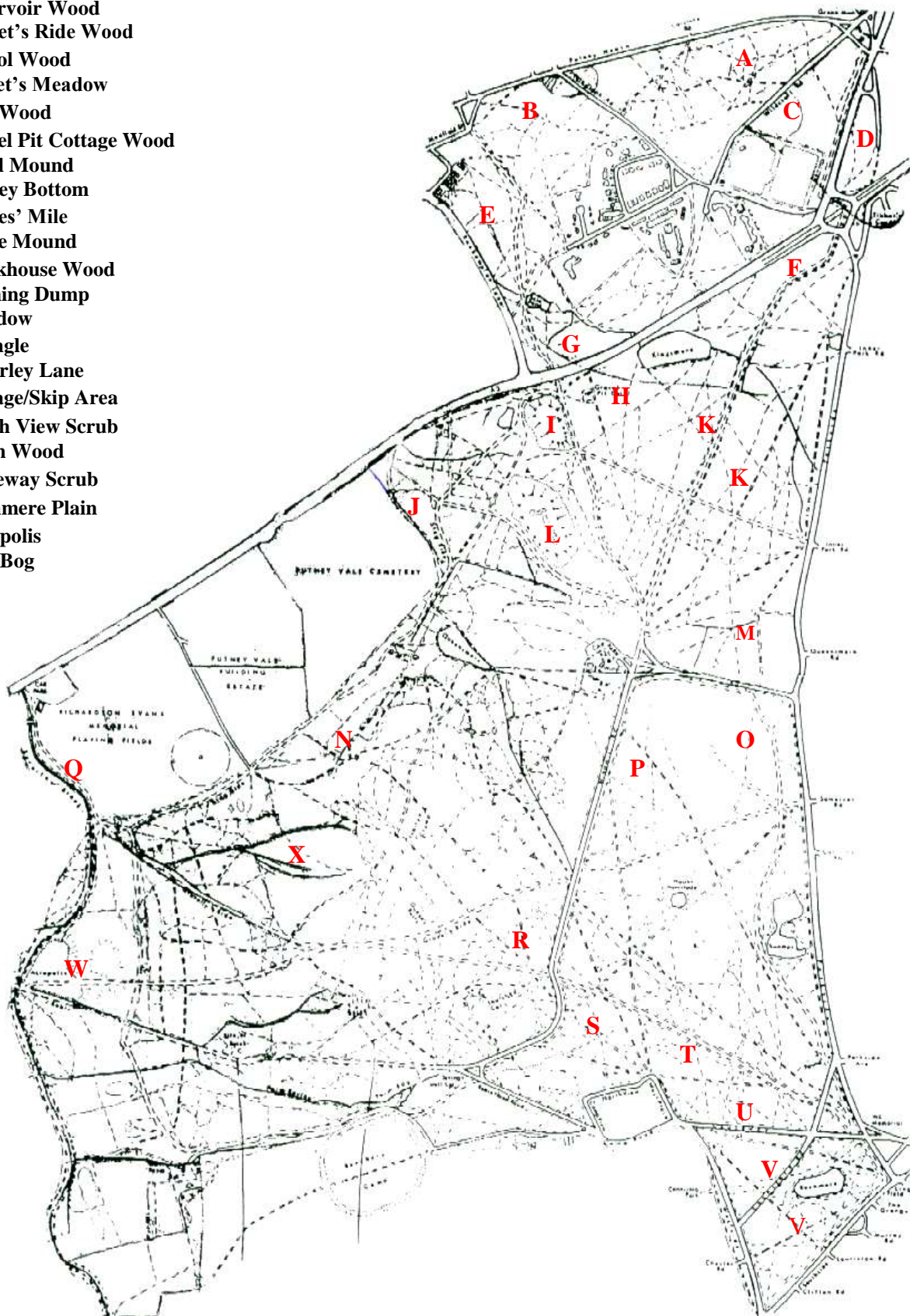
	2014	2013
Canada Goose	2	2
Mandarin Duck	1	1
Tufted Duck	3	3
Hobby	1	1
Moorhen	13	15
Coot	7	6
Grey Wagtail	0	1
Common Whitethroat	33	23
Garden Warbler	19	16
Willow Warbler	1	0



Juvenile
Hobby

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





Common Whitethroat with raspberry near the Causeway