

# Dipper Project



## Dipper Habitat

Dippers inhabit fast flowing streams with rapids, small waterfalls and gravelly beds, and the Shropshire Hills, particularly in the Teme catchment, is the County stronghold.



They feed exclusively on larvae collected on the stream bed (they don't take invertebrates from bankside vegetation, like Grey Wagtails do), and they take readily to nest boxes.

Several other Community Wildlife Groups have put up boxes, and shown that they help increase the population, partly by providing new nest sites on suitable stretches of stream which otherwise lack them, and partly by protecting the eggs and chicks from predators, so the average number of fledged young per nest

increases.

## Dippers in the Strettons area

Dippers were absent from most of the Strettons area since the 1980s, but the population increase across the whole of the Teme catchment as a result of the nest boxes has led to more observations here in recent years, and the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group has now started its own Dipper Project.

Dippers are very territorial, so we need to get a better understanding of which streams in our area they inhabit, and their favoured locations, before putting up boxes.



Many Dippers have colour-rings like the one in the photo. The letter and two numbers on each ring are unique, so if we can read the ring we add to what we know of the life history of the bird.

Nest building usually starts in early April, and young are being fed in late April or early May, so that is the best time to locate breeding pairs. Some pairs raise two broods.

If you see a Dipper, and especially if you see one or a pair regularly, or evidence of breeding behaviour, or you know of a nest site, please tell us.

Please look for colour-rings, and tell us when you report the bird(s) whether you saw any rings (or if you were sure they didn't have any).

**Please report all Dipper sightings to**

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**Leo Smith**