

Bird Group Lapwing and Curlew Survey

A Bird Group meeting was held on 27 March to receive a presentation on the results of the Bird Survey in 2016, plan the survey in 2017, and make other plans for the year. The main target species are Lapwing and Curlew, but another 20 species were also looked for.

The area has been divided up into 20 survey areas, each of 2x2 kilometres square. It takes three half-days chosen by the participants, around 1st April, 1st May and mid-June. Simple instructions and a map to record sightings were provided. Some survey work was carried out in all 20 squares.

Nine pairs of Curlew were found. Four pairs were on and around the common near Magpie Hill and Cleeton St Mary, two near Catherton Marshes and Cramer Gutter, two others on the west side of Clee Hill and one near the Hollywaste crossroads.

We have been looking for local Curlews since 2012, when we found around 13 pairs. The 9 pairs found in 2017 represents a 31% decline in only six years. As far as we know, only one young fledged. Curlews are in danger of disappearing altogether, unless action is taken to help them. Other Community Wildlife Groups have found similar rapid declines, and the Shropshire population declined by an estimated 77% between 1990 and 2010, a period of only 20 years.



There was better news of breeding Lapwings. We found 2-4 pairs, the first for 3 years, all near Hollywaste.

Kestrels, in decline elsewhere, seem to be holding their own here, while sightings of Red Kites are increasing. There are probably 8 – 9 breeding pairs of Kestrel, and a pair in a nest box near Cleeton St. Mary fledged one young. There were no reports of Red Kite breeding, but this seems only a matter of time. Cuckoo was seen or heard in seven of the survey squares. All except five of the target species were found.

Thank you to the 22 local people helped with the survey in 2017: Chris Bargman, Bob Braddock, Beth & Lionel Bridge, Simon Brown & Shropshire Wild Team volunteers, Barbara Daniels, Rachael Davenhill, Eric Davies, Ian Ferguson, Ewan & Celia Gibb, , Peter Johnson, Ian King, Angela & Iain Mackirdy, Chris Neal, Carl Price & family, Peta Sams, Gareth Thomas, Linda Webb, Marian Wootton and Kate Wyke.

Two walks were held, for members and the general public

1. Sunday 19 April, starting at Cleeton St Mary, and visiting the Common up to Magpie Hill. This walk also provided practical training for people to help with the Bird Survey
2. Saturday 13 May at The Novers woodland, specifically to learn about identifying birds by their song (Joint Meeting with Clee Hill Heritage Trust)

Several Barn Owl boxes have been put up in the area, but while two have been used for roosting, none have been used for nesting. A poster appealing for sighting was also put up in the area, and included in last year's report, but sightings were only received from Catherton Marshes.

A full bird survey report for 2017 has been sent to all participants. It can also be found on the Clee Hill part of the Community Wildlife Groups website, www.ShropsCWGs.co.uk

Further information about the Bird Group can be obtained from Anton Schooley 01584 891320, email anton.schooley@gmail.com