



# Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

Annual Report 2021





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# Introduction

## Community Wildlife Groups

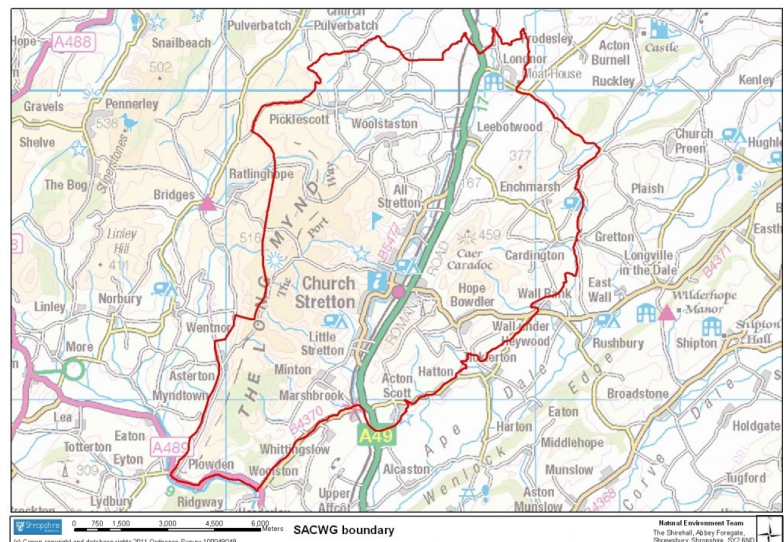
Community Wildlife Groups bring people together to survey and conserve threatened local wildlife. They enable nature enthusiasts to make a real contribution to wildlife conservation in their local area and develop their own skills.

The groups are open to anyone who lives or works in each area, and who wants to actively contribute to local wildlife knowledge and conservation. They are for everyone, from experts to complete novices. Enthusiasm is far more important than detailed knowledge and initial training on identification and simple survey methods is provided. There are currently eight CWGs in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), most developed and supported through a project funded by the Shropshire Hills AONB LEADER programme. For more information on these CWGs, visit the website [www.shropscwgs.org.uk](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk)

## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) was launched in February 2012, after consulting local groups and organisations. The group covers a broad area around the Stretton Hills (right). This boundary is not fixed, so activities can be extended according to the location of members and study subjects.

Since 2013 the group has been co-ordinated by a committee, elected from the membership at the Annual Public Meeting. Survey activities are adopted by members at the Annual Public Meeting, on the condition that they meet the following criteria.



*Each activity requires a leader, who will be responsible for organising surveyors, ensuring that useful data is collected, distributing survey forms (if necessary), analysing data for the SACWG annual report and submitting records to Shropshire's County Recorders. The survey manager will be responsible for ensuring that any necessary training is provided.*

On the Community Wildlife Groups website, you will find that the [SACWG has its own section](#), where you will be able to keep updated with survey activities and the latest discoveries.

We would like to encourage all members to share their wildlife experiences and photographs. If you have seen something interesting or taken a nice wildlife photograph, please let the web manager know by emailing [SACWG\\_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk](mailto:SACWG_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk). For those of you into social media, find us on Twitter



@StrettonsWild or look for the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group page on Facebook. You can use this to keep up to date with latest news, meet other members and share wildlife news.

*Committee members (bold) and project leaders 2021: **Steve Butler (chair)**, **Penny Bienz (publicity and Stepping Stones coordination)**, **Heather Hathaway (secretary)**, **John Baines (website)**, **Will Priestley (treasurer)**, John Bacon, Leo Smith, Isabel Carter, Mike Carter, Caroline Uff, Julie Cowley and Sandra Whitlock.*





# Survey Activities and Results

## Stretton Wetlands report

### **Cudwell Meadow**



Cudwell meadow is now being managed as a wetland wildflower meadow. Purchase and legal ownership of the Meadow in early 2021 coincided with flooding and Covid lock-downs/restrictions making it much harder initially to develop a small core of volunteers to help enjoy, survey and manage the area.

Once the meadow was fenced, two small areas were fenced off to enable wooded copses to develop. Native tree species were selected, including hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, holly, hazel, rowan, dog rose, guelder and bird cherry. Several volunteers planted these out in March, and with careful weeding and watering during the year, they have established well.



Other priorities were to clear up the meadow following the fencing of the woodland edge in the autumn – filling in ruts and building habitat piles from all the brash. A falling willow was pollarded. Dock removal was also a priority following a year without grazing or management. We were fortunate to benefit from a grant from Natural England which provided funds for fencing, tools and a sturdy metal tool box.

Boxes for Tawny Owl and Kestrel were built and placed in the woodland overlooking the meadow. Left over wood yielded several tit boxes too. Some tits moved in but there was no confirmation of owls and kestrels using our boxes though they

are in the area. Pied flycatcher have been heard adjacent to the meadow so we are hopeful they may find the boxes.

Sheep graze the aftermath grass in the autumn and then return for a good feed in the spring. We aim for them to be out by the end of April to facilitate the growth of meadow flowers and grasses. While the meadow flowers were at their best, we held two surveying days at the end of June and in early July. We were very fortunate with the weather. Several people came along to join in and we were blessed by having two county recorders present - Dr Caroline Uff - Coleoptera and Ian Cheeseborough - Hymenoptera. Thanks to their skills and knowledge the final count was high.



We found 28 species of beetles including the impressive Four-banded Longhorn and the Yellow and Black Longhorn. A number of species had larvae present indicating they are breeding happily in the meadow. Habitat piles of willow in the damper areas where the Four-Banded Longhorn beetle are found – should hopefully encourage their breeding.

31 species of Bees and Wasps were identified, many along the field edges by the brook and wood. The list included 4 of the rarer Bilberry bumble bee. There were 10 species of butterfly and moth

including some Cinnabar moths and a Dark Green Fritillary.

We also found 3 species of grasshopper, azure damselfly, 3 of shield bugs including nymphs of the less common Tortoise Shield bug – which is slowly moving northwards and a toad. These were excellent and very encouraging results - which hopefully can only get better.

[Full survey findings](#) are available on the SACWG website.



An early evening flower walk was led by Mike Carter in July and proved very enjoyable and will no doubt be repeated. Due to covid restrictions these events were just shared these with the Friends of Cudwell Meadow - please do sign up if you'd like occasional email updates:

<https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/land/cudwell-meadow/>



Caroline Savage of the Environment Agency visited to carry out a water vole survey. We are delighted to report that field signs were confirmed in three areas in the meadow. She has also given permission for us to build a year round scrape for the benefit of amphibians and other wildlife.



Monthly volunteer work parties now take place on the first Thursday afternoon of each month from 1.30 to 3.30 with a variety of work which has included tree planting, wild flower seed planting, dock removal and the building of habitat piles. In April we plan to dig out a scrape area (alas no machines allowed due to underground pipes) so all volunteers welcomed!

### **Looking ahead to 2022**

We have received a generous grant via Stepping Stones-Green Recovery Fund. This will be used to produce a permanent information board and add to our tool supply, in particular for a couple more scythes which are excellent for weed control. A small seating area is planned for work parties and visitors. A trail camera will hopefully gain some shots of our elusive water voles and otter.

During 2022 we plan to hold an open event in June followed by a wild flower walk.

**Isabel Carter, January 2022**

## Dormice in the Strettons

There are known to be small, fragmented populations of dormice in the Strettons area. The focus of the 'Dormouse Project 2021' was to review and monitor the existing nest box schemes and known populations. Boxes were checked in mid-October in conjunction with nut searches. In addition to signs of dormice, many boxes were found to be home for a variety of other mammals including woodmice, shrews and yellow-necked mice.

### **Ragleth Wood (National Trust).**

After many years of failing to find definitive signs of dormice, a classic dormouse nest (from the previous season) was found whilst maintaining boxes in early spring 2021. As a result, the boxes, which were in a poor condition, were supplemented with 14 new boxes (built and erected in June by National Trust staff and volunteers). Several others were repaired by SACWG. No further nests were recorded in 2021.

### **Bushmoor Coppice (Shropshire Ornithological Society).**

The last confirmed record was in 2016. No signs of dormice were found, and many boxes need replacing. This is planned for 2022.

### **Gulley Green (Local Wildlife Site).**

There are many well maintained bird boxes on this privately owned site, which the dormice seem happy to use. Of 30 boxes checked, 6 had dormouse nests, and dormouse-nibbled nuts were present suggesting that the population here is still healthy.

### **Comley Quarry (Shropshire Wildlife Trust).**

Several boxes were removed for repair in spring by SACWG and replaced later in the year (now 10 boxes present). No definitive dormouse signs were recorded.

### **Other sites and nut searches**

Dormouse tubes were checked in the Batch Valley / All Stretton area and a nut search carried out, but no signs were reported. However, signs were reported from private land in All Stretton where there is a well-established population, and work is ongoing to extend and enhance the habitat there by the owner. Searches on private land in the Horderley area found characteristically nibbled nuts over a slightly more extensive area than previously recorded, suggesting a thriving dormice population. Current management work by the owner is enhancing the dormouse habitat.

Plans are in place to replace damaged boxes and put some up in new areas, with funding from the 'Stepping Stones Project' and Shropshire Ornithological Society.

All records have been submitted to Peoples Trust for Endangered Species who lead the 'National Dormouse Monitoring Programme'.

Thanks to Steve Butler, Gill Silk, Howard Davies, Ian Cheeseborough, Heather Hathaway, Jane & Peter Howsam and National Trust staff and volunteers for all their help.





Erecting new dormouse boxes in Ragleth Wood (image ©National Trust)

**Caroline Uff, January 2022**

# Swifts in the Strettons

## Purpose and objectives of the project

The swift (*Apus apus*) is amber-listed as a bird of conservation concern (due to falling population numbers) and it is thought that the loss of nest sites due to modern building methods and materials has played a key role in their decline. By recording known nest locations, it is possible to monitor whether these sites continue to be used in subsequent years or whether new sites are selected and, importantly, to liaise with residents, builders and planners when works to improve properties is carried out to ensure the preservation of nesting opportunities.

Surveying also indicates where it might be worthwhile installing artificial nest boxes to increase colony size – the birds are sociable and tend to nest within close range of each other.

Swifts are commonly observed in and around the Strettons but there was no formal recording of the locations of nest sites or the number of birds until 2014, when the first “Swifts in the Strettons” was inaugurated by the Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group, under the leadership of Peta Sams.

Observations were carried out in 2015 and 2016 which enabled the earlier study to be built on and extended. In 2021 the same methodology was again used, but observations were on a more ad hoc basis. Any reports by members of the public were also followed up.

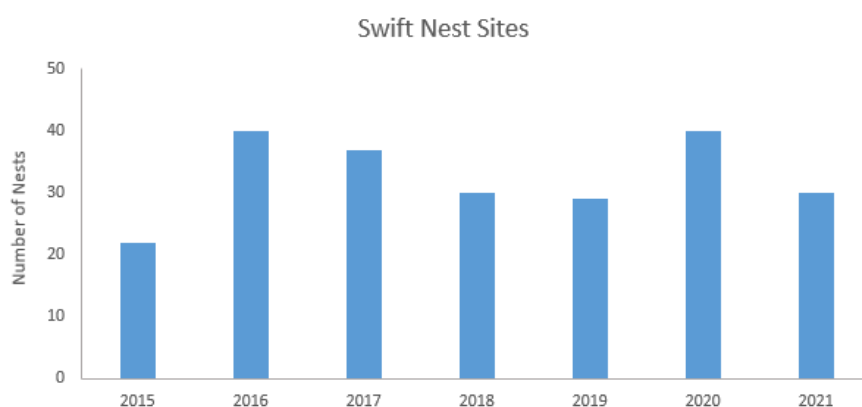
The location of the nest sites recorded will be passed to Shropshire Council, Church Stretton Town Council, Church Stretton Civic Society, RSPB swift survey and the county bird recorder for use when proposals for maintenance or modification of buildings occupied by swifts are filed with planning authorities and to establish the presence of swift populations in the county.

## Results

### *General Observations of Swifts in the Strettons*

No formal surveying took place in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The first confirmed sighting of swifts within the Strettons was 2 May 2021, 20 days earlier than the previous year. As the months of May and June progressed more sightings were observed and recorded as nesting birds. As in the previous three years, some of the key locations that had been recorded in the early years of the survey (2014-2020) did not produce records in 2021. At other hotspots in the town swifts were observed in groups as aerial counts. 30 nest sites were confirmed (i.e. birds entering a consistent location two or more times, or feeding young, or presence of young), see Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Number of swift nest sites year on year in the Strettons since 2015.**



The last date of observation of a swift was mid-August 2021.

#### *Swift Nest Site Locations*

Nest aspect is varied although it is evident that a westerly aspect is the least preferred (see table 1).

**Table 1: Nest Aspect for Confirmed Nest sites (where known).**

ASPECT OF NEST	CONFIRMED SITES
N	7
S	18
E	14
W	1

Of the confirmed nest sites in Church Stretton town they were found in 21 buildings at 21 addresses. Nest sites were confirmed in Little Stretton, however none were reported in All Stretton.

#### **Summary**

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the confirmed nests recorded in the 2021 survey season:

- Nest observations were down compared to 2020
- The original hotspot area in the town centre continues to see a decline in observations and elsewhere fewer sightings were reported
- Certain post War buildings have a high occupancy rate
- The installation of three nest boxes on one building in Church Stretton resulted again in successful breeding in 2021, and also due to camera technology at this location fighting birds were also observed
- Of the 13 other nest boxes installed in 2017/2018 there was one record of occupancy in 2021.

#### **Concluding remarks**

The 2021 survey saw a reduction in recorded nest sites and this is of concern as one of the prominent locations is currently undergoing a programme of re-roofing. These sites will be lost to swifts unless action can be taken. It also highlights the importance of the surveys as a way of providing evidence of wildlife occupation and the opportunity to discuss with the homeowners/landlords mitigation measures.

Anecdotally the consensus is that there appeared to be fewer swifts (as aerial observations) than previously noted. This may be reflected in the reduction in nest sites counted but it is too early to say if this is a trend. Of note, swift nest recording requires intensive effort to capture all of the records and the decrease in nest sites observed may also be due, in part, to the level of recording effort. It is important to be consistent with effort year on year but weather variation can disrupt this. It is proposed that in the future daily weather records should be made to assist in improving the science behind these surveys.

The 2021 swift breeding season in the Strettons saw reasonable weather conditions and it is surmised that this was beneficial for chick growth. 2021 also saw relatively good weather and it is hoped that within the next few years an increase in the return of breeding birds will reflect this. Of course their success in breeding also depends upon available sites too.



### **Acknowledgements**

This survey would not have been possible without the efforts of Richard Bacon, Gay Walker, Sandra Whitlock, Will Priestley, Janet Longstaff and Andrew Morton.

**Julie Cowley**

**27 November 2021**

### **IMPORTANT: Confidentiality**

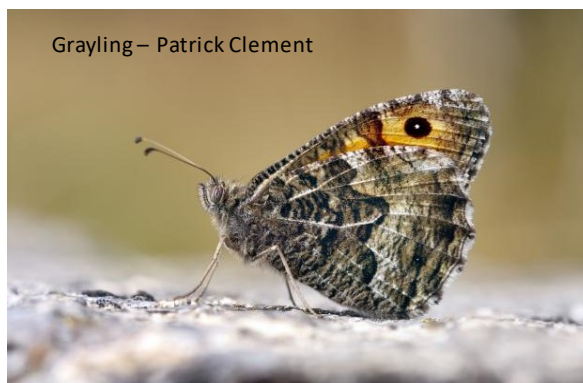
This is an edited version of the report without specific site information. Should you need to know further information please pass your request to Julie Cowley (email: [grahamandjuliecowley@gmail.com](mailto:grahamandjuliecowley@gmail.com) or phone: 01694 722310), who will consider whether this is appropriate.



# Butterfly report

## The aim

**The aim** of the current project is to try and build a better picture of the diversity and numbers of butterflies in the Strettons area and highlight vulnerable colonies that may be threatened if their habitat is lost. The data collected will serve also as a baseline against which we can measure future changes in the butterfly population.



Grayling – Patrick Clement

## Methodology

This year members of SACWG have had a two-pronged effort to record butterflies in the Stretton Area. As before, occasional sightings have been recorded by 9 members and 29 species identified. This is 29 out of 37 species that can be seen in South Shropshire. One transect has been carried out during 2021. John Bacon has continued his transect on Hazler Hill. A transect involves walking the same route every week between April and September recording butterflies using a proscribed method stated by UKBMS and results have been entered into their site.

There were no timed counts for Grayling and Green Hairstreak carried out in Cardingmill Valley.

The survey was composed from sightings made by John Bacon, John Arnfield, Gill Silk, , Caroline Uff, H Davies, John Baines, Heather Hathaway, Gill Davies and Caroline Wellings. We are very grateful for their contributions.

The Big Butterfly Count took place in early August this year and these are extracts from the Butterfly Conservation conclusions:

*Dr Zoë Randle, Senior Surveys Officer at Butterfly Conservation said: "This year's results show that the average number of butterflies and moths per count is the lowest we've recorded so far. On average people counted nine butterflies or moths per count, which is down from 11 in 2020, and down again from 16 in 2019. More counts are undertaken and submitted year on year, but it seems that there are fewer butterflies and moths around to be counted."*

*Dr Randle explains: "Some of the UK's butterflies have more than one generation per year, meaning we would see adult butterflies in spring and summer. The majority of these double-brooded species experienced their worst year since the start of the Big Butterfly Count in 2010. Weather changes are likely to be the cause of this. March 2021 was warmer than average which would have stimulated butterfly activity. However, May was very wet which will have hampered butterfly feeding and breeding. These combined weather effects are likely to have reduced the spring generation which has knock-on effects for the second generation in the summer."*

Some of the UK's most-loved species including the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock butterflies dropped in numbers this summer. The iconic Peacock butterfly suffered its lowest numbers since 2012. The Small Tortoiseshell, once a frequent visitor to gardens in the UK, had its third worst summer in the history of the Big Butterfly Count and shows a significant long-term decline in Britain.

## Results

The following compilation of results combines all the observations received, but the numbers are a mere approximation, as some of the reports recorded only the presence of the species and did not include the number present. The figures in brackets are from 2020.

<b>Analysis of recordings made in 2021</b>					
<b>Species</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Last seen</b>
	<b>Recorded</b>	<b>seen</b>	<b>of sites</b>	<b>Seen</b>	
Brimstone	13(14)	2(1)	5(6)	24/03/21	07/10/21
Comma	11(9)	2(2)	5(3)	22/03/21	28/09/21
Common Blue	20(12)	5(8)	7(3)	27/05/21	05/09/21
DK Green Fritillary	13(4)	6(1)	7(2)	24/06/21	29/08/21
Essex Skipper	0	0	0		
Gatekeeper	20(11)	23(1)	8(5)	15/07/21	02/09/21
Grayling	3(0)	6(0)	2(0)	25/07/21	10/08/21
Green Hairstreak	2(6)	1(2)	1(3)	15/06/21	29/06/21
Green veined White	25(23)	8(12)	8(70)	19/04/21	21/09/21
Holly Blue	16(16)	3(2)	4(5)	19/04/21	02/09/21
Large Skipper	7(6)	2(2)	2(3)	10/06/21	08/07/21
Large White	21(23)	11(13)	8(6)	29/05/21	15/09/21
Marbled White	3(2)	2(2)	3(1)	08/07/21	15/07/21
Meadow Brown	28(23)	24(22)	11(8)	10/06/21	19/08/21
Orange Tip	20(22)	4(1)	8(7)	08/04/21	10/06/21
Painted Lady	11(6)	2(2)	5(5)	15/06/21	07/09/21
Peacock	33(30)	11(15)	7(9)	24/03/21	23/09/21
Purple Hairstreak	3(1)	1(1)	2(1)	11/07/21	08/08/21
Red Admiral	27(23)	3(4)	7(8)	30/03/21	21/10/21
Ringlet	16(13)	23(12)	9(5)	01/07/21	13/08/21
Silver-washed Fritillary	5(1)	1(1)	3(1)	13/07/21	27/07/21
Small Copper	25(24)	12(6)	8(6)	24/04/21	13/10/21
Small Heath	11(8)	24(51)	6(3)	03/06/21	23/09/21
Small Skipper/Essex	10(7)	25(19)	4(1)	08/07/21	19/08/21
Small Tortoiseshell	35(42)	12(19)	10(9)	27/02/21	11/10/21
Small White	39(33)	15(25)	7(7)	08/04/21	23/09/21
Speckled Wood	23(24)	5(2)	8(6)	25/05/21	26/09/21
Wall Brown	8(8)	6(2)	4(4)	05/08/21	31/08/21
White-letter Hairstreak	1(1)	1(1)	(1)	25/07/21	03/08/21
<b>Total 29 Species</b>					



### Conclusions

The recordings for this year show that Common Blue, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver Washed Fritillary, Gatekeeper, Grayling and Green Veined White had been recorded more often and on more sites. Marbled White had been seen on 3 sites, but Green Hairstreak sightings were rare.



Common Blue © Peter Withers (left) and Dark Green Fritillary by Bob Eade (right)

**Heather Hathaway**  
**January 2022**

## Strettons Meadow Group

The Stretton's and Apedale section of the Marches Meadow Group (MMG) supported by SACWG.



Above: The National Trust's Jinlye Meadows, All Stretton

It's great that there is growing interest by meadow owners located in the east of the MMG's area around The Strettons and Apedale with several requesting visits during the past year to discuss and advise on management options. These were crowned when several owners came together on 20th July for an excellent tour by Peter Carty, of the National Trust's lovely Jinlye Meadows (above).

Management of the eastern Ragleth Group of meadows has continued with late winter and early spring grazing by Badger Face sheep to get the grass really short so that from late April through to September the butterflies, bees and other insects could enjoy the flower nectar harvest.





seeds from the adjacent County Wildlife Site meadows SO 49.41.

An interpretation board (left) funded by the Stepping Stones Project, was put up adjacent to the Ragleth Hill footpath describing the management and wildlife of these special small meadows. The 1kg of Hay Rattle seed spread last autumn on to NT's Ragleth meadow, to reduce the vigour of the grasses, germinated really well and thanks to the taking of a hay crop in August by contractors Jeremy and Joe Dale, this year's seed has now been spread even wider! This has been followed by the spreading of green hay and 2.5kg of 'Grass Grabber harvested



On the 24<sup>th</sup> September we gave a demonstration of the Grass Grabber brush seed harvester to the Trustees of the AONB Trust - a visit postponed from last year due to Covid 19 - who had kindly contributed £2k to its purchase; along with a tour of the 'Ragleth Meadows.

We are grateful to SACWG for their funding support of our meadow management through the People's Postcode Lottery. We welcome other meadow owners to join the MMG and hope to arrange further field visits in the Church Stretton area.

The Stretton's and Apedale contact: Adrian Cullis [adriancullis19@gmail.com](mailto:adriancullis19@gmail.com)

Ragleth Group contact: [john.bacon@phonecoop.coop](mailto:john.bacon@phonecoop.coop)

MMG: <https://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/> Secretary: [richard.w.small@gmail.com](mailto:richard.w.small@gmail.com)

**Adrian Cullis and John Bacon**  
**January 2022**



## Community Tree Planting Project

Work has focused on three key areas during 2021.

1) Ongoing maintenance work continued in 2021 on the existing community tree planting blocks in Batch Valley. The tree planting project established small areas of native woodland species to create a 'picnic table' (and habitat) for wildlife. A huge 'thank you' goes to the Church Stretton 2<sup>nd</sup> Longmynd scouts and scout leaders as they undertook bracken bashing, weed suppression using carpet off-cuts and the removal of spiral guards on the established plantings. Some scouts have been involved with this project since it began in 2016 and have contributed to the annual bracken bashing, as well as building bug hotels, bird, and bat boxes. There are ongoing concerns that areas adjacent to the planting blocks are not being adequately maintained.



2) A new project to look at habitat restoration for dormouse included a draft plan of works for National Trust land in Batch Valley. This identified the requirements to create new and improve existing hedgerows and improve existing woodlands areas. This draft plan was supported by the PPL monies. At this time no funding has been identified to take these works forward.

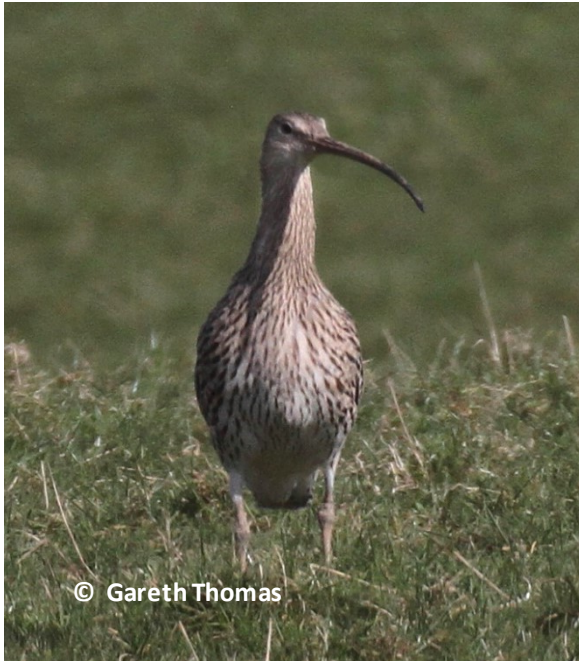
3) Working with a private landowner on the Long Mynd, a project to create new and improve existing hedgerows and create new woodland areas is underway, over a total project area of 10.67 hectares. An initial application to the Shropshire Hills AONB 'Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme' is promising, which will go some way to cover the fencing and tree planting costs. In all cases local provenance, native species will be planted, and the project will engage the local community.



Photos: Dr Penny Bienz

**Dr Penny Bienz**  
**February 2022**

# Lapwing, curlew and other birds survey



© Gareth Thomas

## Introduction

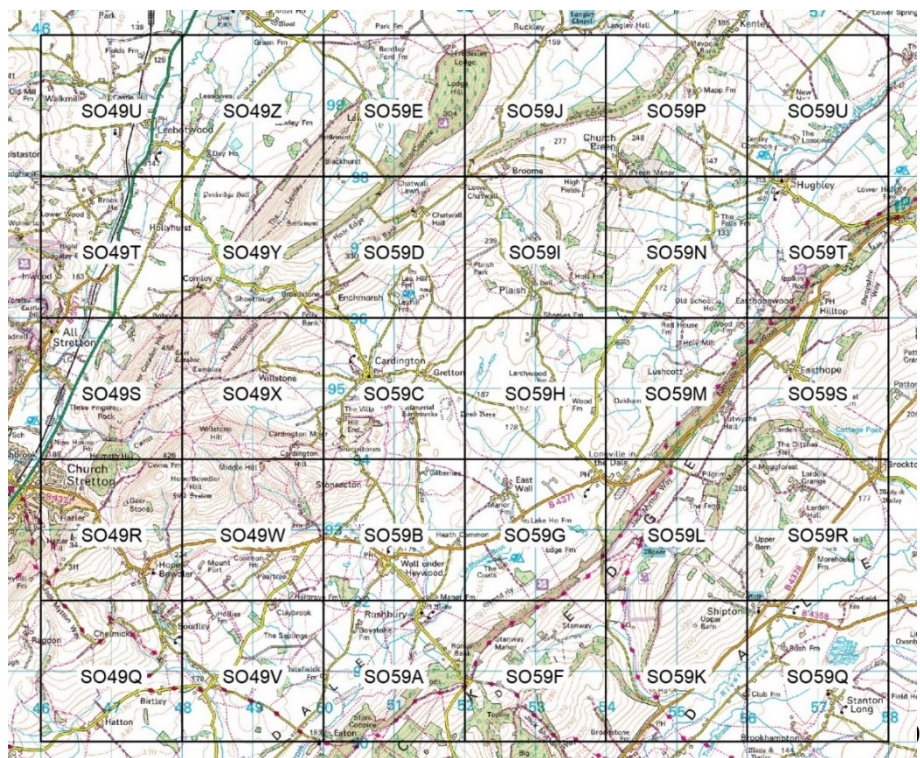
Lapwing and Curlew have both suffered a massive contraction in range and population decline in the last 20 years or so, nationally and locally. Curlew has been described as the UK's highest bird conservation priority, as we have an estimated 28% of the European breeding population, and 19 – 27% of the world population.

The Strettons area Community Wildlife Group agreed to conduct a Lapwing and Curlew survey in 2017, to complement similar surveys carried out by other Community Wildlife Groups in different parts of the Shropshire Hills. The Church Stretton branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society also agreed to participate in the survey.

An area was selected where these species were found breeding in the 2008-13 Shropshire Bird Atlas, comprising 30 2x2 kilometre squares on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, known as "tetrads", shown here.

The aim was to locate the territories of breeding pairs, and record behaviour, to estimate the population. No attempt was made to locate nests. Although the survey concentrated on the two main target species, and their habitats, surveyors were asked to also record on their maps any of 23 other target species seen, particularly Kestrel and Cuckoo, if they were confident that they could do so.

Surveyors were recruited for all of the 30 squares, and were asked to make three visits, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June, at times convenient to them, with visits concentrating on habitats where the main target species might be found, and lasting around three hours each. The surveys were conducted from Public Rights of Way, unless individual surveyors obtained landowners permission to leave them. Survey maps and recording instructions were supplied. A practical fieldwork training meeting was held for those that wanted one.







© Celia Todd

The survey was a success, and all 30 squares were covered. It was repeated in 2018 and 2019, using the same methodology and aiming to cover the same 30 squares. Plans were made to repeat it in 2020, but coverage was limited due to Government restrictions to limit the spread of coronavirus. However, particular efforts were made to continue to record Curlews, as “the Curlew situation is critical, with a 77% decline between 1990 and 2010, and a further decline since. There’s probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County now, and we haven’t got long to save them from local extinction. We can’t afford a total loss of data on their population and distribution in 2020”. Coverage of Curlew was probably better than usual, with people exercising from home, but coverage of Lapwing was less good than usual.

Participation in 2021 was close to what was achieved in earlier years, and only one survey square received no coverage. Fifty-one participants spent over 440 hours on the survey.

## Results

The following maps show the distribution of Lapwing and Curlew territories found in 2021.

**The Curlew population is estimated at 8 - 9 pairs. At least one pair of Lapwing was found, but there may have been as many as four.**

**One pair of Curlews, in SO49W, may have been lost since 2021, but the pairs near Enchmarch (SO59D and Stanton Long (SO59Q) were both present for the first time.**

The number of Lapwing is uncertain because one pair probably moved after failing at its first nest site, which probably held two pairs, and a single Lapwing was seen at another site, where possibly a mate was out of sight sitting on a nest.

The surveyors do not look for nests, but in 2021 one was found while helping the *Save our Curlews* project (see below). No other nests or chicks were found, and it is believed that none fledged in the area. In 2020, one pair had chicks, but there was no evidence of any fledged young. There was no evidence that the Curlews produced any chicks, let alone fledged young in 2019, but there were at least two chicks (outcome unknown) in 2018.



Strettons Area CWG  
&  
Church Stretton SOS

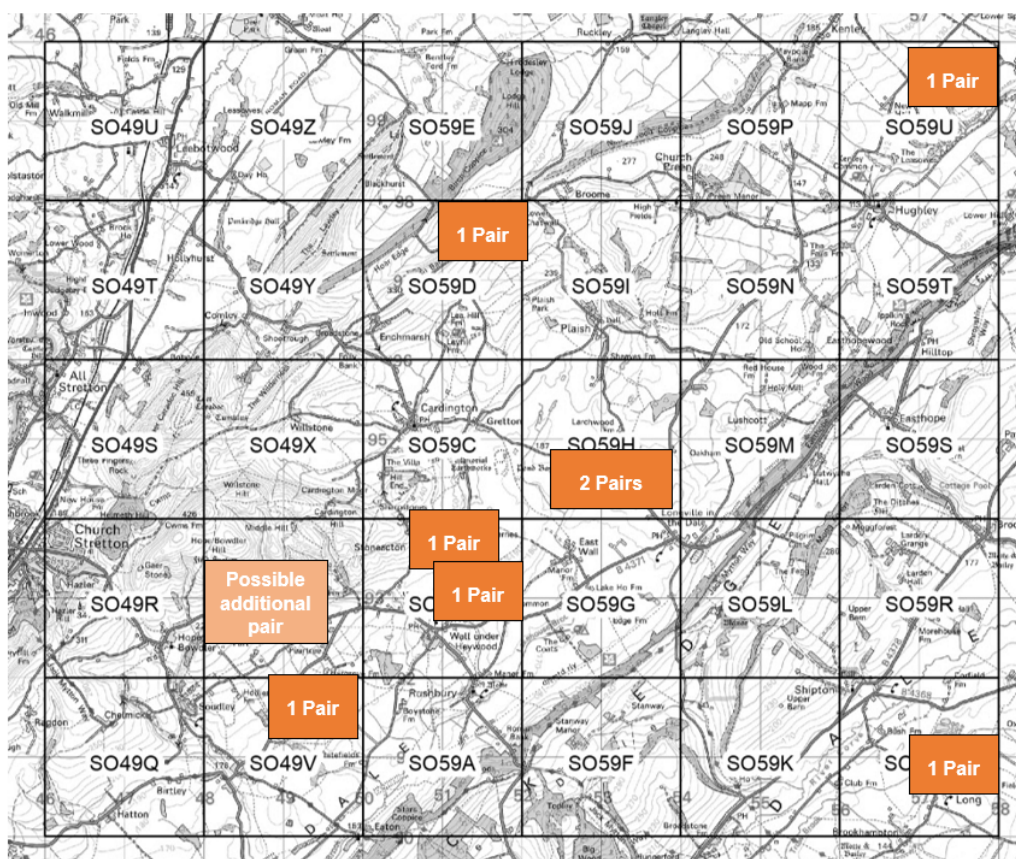
Lapwing &  
Curlew Survey

Results 2021

**Curlew**  
**territories**  
(All survey  
and other  
information)

Estimated  
population

8 - 9  
Pairs



Strettons Area CWG  
&  
Church Stretton SOS

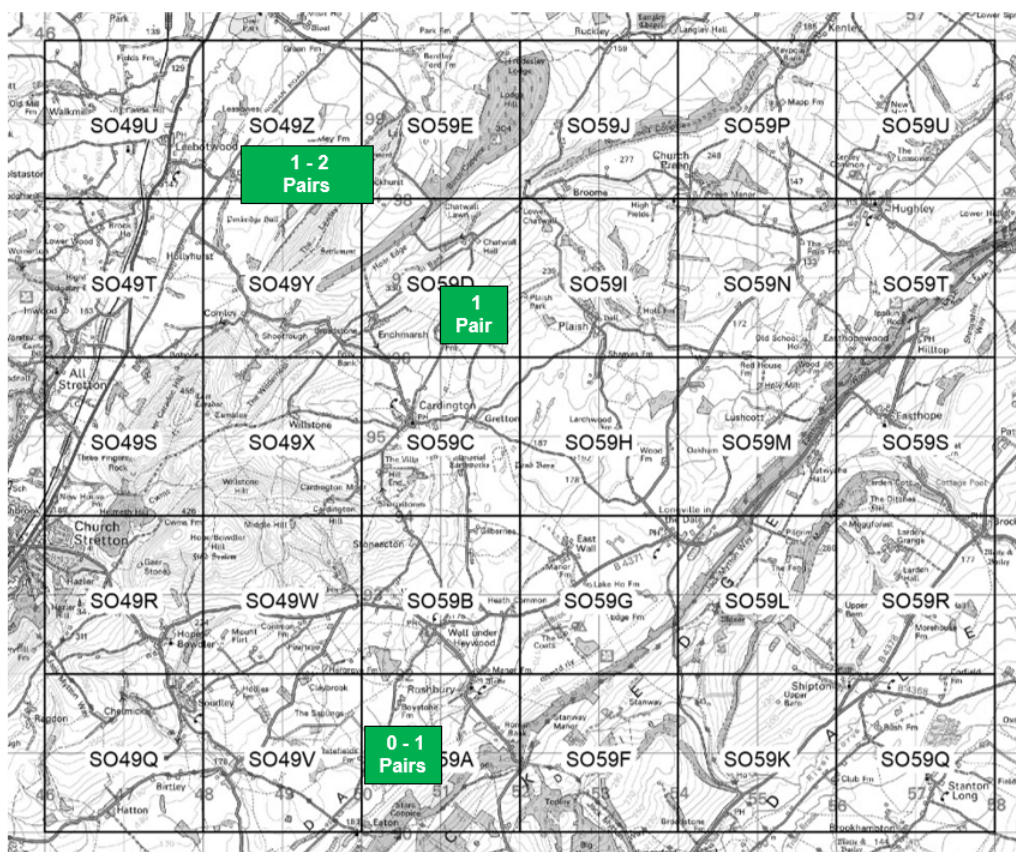
Lapwing &  
Curlew Survey

Results 2021

**Lapwing**  
(All survey  
periods, + casual  
records)

Estimated  
population

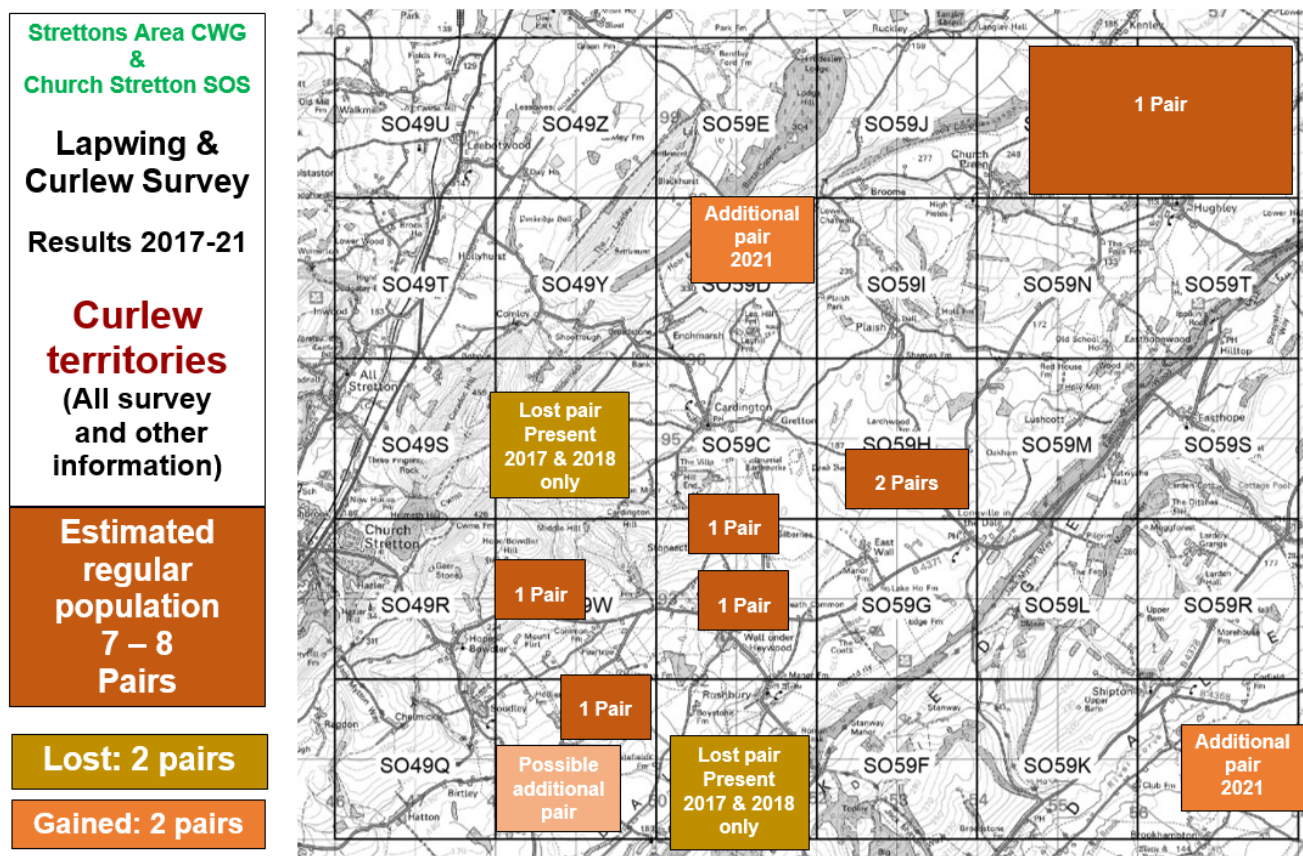
1 – 4 Pairs  
Found





Adult Curlews are generally site-faithful, so it is possible to compare results year on year. The Curlew results since 2017 have been assessed, and the results are shown on the third map. The apparent increase in the Curlew population is probably due to better coverage year on year, as surveyors got to know their squares better, then in 2020 as a result of people exercising from home.

Most pairs present in 2021 have been present each year since 2021, but it appears that two pairs were lost in 2019, but two pairs were gained in 2021.



Curlew and Lapwing were the main target species, but participants were also asked to record Other Target Species if possible, and most did so

They were requested to make a particular effort to record Kestrels, as they too have declined considerably in recent years, and a nest box scheme and colour-ringing project is being undertaken to try and find out why. Evidence was found for only four pairs, compared to an estimated 7-9 pairs in 2020, 4 – 5 pairs in 2019 (another very poor year for them), and up to 10 pairs in 2018, perhaps a few more than the 6 – 8 estimated in 2017.

Cuckoo has also become increasingly rare – the BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 71% decline in both England and the English West Midlands region between 1995 and 2018.

Members were advised in 2020 that there were more Cuckoo records than usual, but “it’s not clear whether there are more Cuckoos about, or we’re better able to hear them in the peace and quiet of staying at home”. The population estimate of 7 territorial males in 2020 was substantially more than recorded in previous years. In 2019, there were up to three males, and probably only one in 2018 and 2017. The five males in 2021 was the highest, apart from 2020.



The first successful breeding of Red Kite in Shropshire for 130 years occurred as recently as 2006, but there are around 50 known pairs now, still mainly in the south-west hills, but there have been nests north of Shrewsbury each year since 2017, and the most easterly nest to date was reported in 2019 from near the Staffordshire border.

In the Strettons area too, Red Kites have increased rapidly. The first nest east of the A49 road was found in 2012, and, in 2021, five nests were found: two failed, but the other three were successful, fledging at least four young. There are likely to be other pairs nesting at unknown locations, as wing-tagged birds that are old enough to breed have been photographed in the area.

On the bird survey, at least 28 Red Kites were recorded in 17 squares, rather more than in previous years, also reflecting the spread of this species.

Apart from the five main Target Species listed above, members were asked to record observations of 19 Other Target species: Barn Owl, Bullfinch, Dipper, Dunnock, Grey Partridge, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Red Kite, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Snipe, Spotted Flycatcher, Stonechat, Swift (nest sites only), Tree Sparrow, Wheatear, Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer. The results are shown in Table 1.

In addition to the Target Species listed in Table 1, a Barn Owl was recorded in SO59B on each of the first two surveys, and was seen coming out of a likely nest hole.

Four species were not recorded at all: Grey Partridge, Dipper, Swift (nest sites) and Spotted Flycatcher, although the last of these was recorded in SO59D on 2 July. There was only one record of Snipe, 5 in the first survey in SO49P. These would have been passage, not breeding, birds.

There is a separate Swift project, and details can be found elsewhere in the Community Wildlife Group's Annual Report.



**Table 1. Other Target Species - Summary**

Square (Tetrad)	Number of Each Species Recorded										
	Red Kite	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Dunnock	Wheat-ear	Stone-chat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow-hammer	Reed Bunting
SO49 Q	2	5		5						2	
SO49 R		8			1	2					2
SO49 S	1		1	2	2	2					1
SO49 T	None of these target species recorded										1
SO49 U	None of these target species recorded										
SO49 V	10			1			1				
SO49 W	1	5	15	1		4		5			1
SO49 X	None of these target species recorded										
SO49 Y	1		10	1						1	
SO49 Z	1					1				1	
SO59 A	1	7	1	2			2		2	3	
SO59 B	2	2							1	10	
SO59 C	1										
SO59 D		5	1		2	1				2	1
SO59 E		3							2	2	
SO59 F	1	4		2				2	2		
SO59 G	None of these target species recorded										
SO59 H	1	3	1					6	2	1	
SO59 I	1	2		1							
SO59 J	None of these target species recorded										
SO59 L	None of these target species recorded										
SO59 M	None of these target species recorded										
SO59 N	1	4		11						8	
SO59 P	1	11		7						2	
SO59 Q	None of these target species recorded										
SO59 R	Square not surveyed										
SO59 S	1			2						4	
SO59 T	1	12		4				20	1	8	
SO59 U	1	7		6						4	
Max Birds	28	78	29	45	5	10	3	33	10	49	5
Tetrads	17	14	6	13	3	5	2	4	6	14	4



### **Save our Curlews Campaign Nest Finding and Protection Project**

The Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) has been carrying out research with other Community Wildlife Groups to find nests, put an electric fence around them to protect the eggs from predators, and then fix radio-tags to the chicks and track them to see how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Not enough young birds fledge to replace the older birds dying off. We need to know why.

This innovative research was extended to the Strettons area in 2021, with land-owners help. The project is expensive, and has been funded by Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS), the Strettons area Curlew Appeal (featured in several Stretton Focus articles), and



several grants, including substantial ones from the Stepping Stones project and the Stretton Focus Community Awards Scheme.

Almost all the landowners we approached were pleased to have Curlews on their land, supported our efforts to protect them, and gave permission for us to look for, and fence, the nests. We are grateful for their support.

Five nests were found and fenced. The fences worked very well (none of the nests were predated), but one nest was abandoned shortly before the three eggs hatched, and three more of the total of 17 protected eggs did not hatch. Eleven chicks in four broods hatched and were radio-tagged.

Chicks usually leave the nest within a couple of days of hatching, and are on the ground for 5-6 weeks before they can fly. They are vulnerable for the whole of this period. Failure of chicks to survive and fledge is a major cause of the Curlew population decline, locally and nationally, and we need a better understanding of the reasons so we can develop effective conservation measures.

This happened in our area too: unfortunately, all 11 chicks were predated within a few days of hatching. You can read more about what has been done on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/). This describes the results in detail, our future plans, and the overwhelming evidence that predation by foxes and other predators is the main cause of Curlew's continuing decline. It is clear that the annual release of millions of pheasants for shooting, only a third of which are actually shot, results in an over-abundant food supply which maintains the numbers of the Curlew's main predators well above naturally sustainable levels.

You can find more information about the Appeal, including details of how to make donations and where to send them, on our website [www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-news/2021-curlew-fundraising-appeal/](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-news/2021-curlew-fundraising-appeal/)

The work is part of the SOS "Save our Curlews" Campaign: see [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

The campaign is encouraging a network of 10 Community Wildlife Groups across Shropshire, including ours, to monitor Curlews. The Groups cover 137 tetrads where the vast majority of the County's Curlew population was found in the recent 2008-13 Bird Atlas project. A map showing the area covered by each group, overlain on the Curlew distribution map, can be found on the SOS website. Around 90-110 pairs were found altogether in 2021. Over 270 people participated, and put in nearly 2,300 hours, a clear indication of the commitment of local people to saving our Curlews.

## Participants

Thanks to the following people, who undertook the survey work and / or supplied records:

Chris Amass, John Arnfield, Meg Bacon, Steve Baker, Alison Bennett, Cathy & David Bowler, Lucy Callwood, Phil Constable, Belinda Cousens, Mags Cousins, Julie Cowley, Adrian Cullis, Gill Davies, Ruth Dennis-Jones, Alistair Edie, Greg & Sue Forster, Beth & Rob Furlong, Joe Gomme, Alyson Harrison, Jackie Harrison, Melanie & Peter Houlder, Helen Howes, Jim Jarrett, Tony Jones, Claire & Denis Kelly, John Knowles, David Matthews, Andrew May, Shirley McNichol, Andrew Morton, Ron Parnell, Adrian Pickles, Sue Pinsent, Ian, Jill & Robert Plumridge, Jane Potts, Will Priestley, Anne Schofield, Ray Slack, Leo Smith, Dee Snape, Carol Thickers, Caroline Uff, Dick Ward and Dan Watkins.

Thanks also to:

- Adrian Cullis and Gill Davies, for making several additional survey visits to monitor the Curlews;
- Adrian Cullis and Lorna Taylor, for making contact with landowners with breeding Curlews, to seek permission for nest finding;



### **Full Report**

A detailed report of the methodology and results has been supplied to all the participants, and can be found on the website, [www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/lapwing-and-curlew-survey/](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/lapwing-and-curlew-survey/)

### **Acknowledgements**

The *Save our Curlews* Nest Finding and Protection project received a grant from Stretton Focus Community Awards.

### **Plans for the Future**

The survey will be repeated in future years, so we can get a better picture of the population and distribution of Lapwing and Curlew. In 2022, in co-operation with farmers, the Save our Curlews campaign will continue to promote conservation, and organise nest protection for Curlews.

New participants are needed for the survey in 2022. It's easy and enjoyable and simple instructions will be provided.

A joint meeting of the Strettons area Community Wildlife Group and the Church Stretton SOS branch will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16 March, at the Methodist Church Hall, Watling St., Church Stretton, for a presentation of the 2021 results, and plan the 2022 survey. New members, and anyone interested in birds, will be very welcome.

For those that want one, there will be a practical (socially-distanced) training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record what you see, around the end of March.

**Leo Smith**

**January 2022**



## 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 largely on larvae collected on the stream bed (they do not take invertebrates from bankside vegetation, like Grey Wagtails do), and, to a lesser extent, on small fish. They take readily to carefully-sited nest boxes over water.

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.



The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group has now started its own Dipper Project, covering the Cound Brook north to Longnor, and the Quinney Brook south to Marshbrook, and their tributaries.

In 2020, the population in the area was estimated at 9 – 11 pairs.

### **2021**

Members were again asked to report sightings, and another appeal for information appeared in *Stretton Focus*.

Sites occupied last year, or known to have been occupied previously, were revisited in 2021, but several were not occupied. A new site was found, with old nests from previous years, but it was unoccupied.

The population in 2021 is estimated at 8 pairs. Only four young are known to have fledged, considerably fewer than in 2020. Water levels were high at the start of the season, and the weather was cold, probably resulting in less invertebrate food in the streams, perhaps accounting for the unoccupied sites and the fewer breeding pairs.

Several new nest boxes have been installed.

### **Rings**

Ringling has been going on for many years, across the whole of the Teme Catchment, but also on the Cound Brook around Leebotwood and Longnor, but the colour-rings to identify individual birds in the field were only introduced in 2014.



A colour-ring on the left leg is shown in the lower photo. The letter and two numbers on each ring are unique, so if the ring can be read it will add to what is known of the life history of the bird.

The smaller ring looks silver, and in silhouette it looks like a small wellington boot (the leg appears thicker at the bottom than the top). The Dipper in both photos has a small metal (BTO) ring on the right leg.

Members were asked to report colour-rings and the smaller metal rings, and an attempt was made to read the former, by photography with a long lens, or a telescope. Unfortunately, no ringing was allowed at winter roost sites

over the winter 2020-21 period, so far fewer ringed Dippers were seen than in the 2020 breeding season. Four colour-ringed birds were found: three were read, but one did not provide a good enough view. One of the three was colour-ringed in Cardingmill Valley in the winter of 2018, and the other two were ringed in winter 2019, all as adults at or very close to the sites where they nested. None of them had been ringed earlier, as nestlings

By carrying on with the project in future years, it will be possible to build up an understanding of how long Dippers live, how far they move between fledging, roosting and nesting, and fidelity.

#### Plans for 2022

The Dipper project will continue.

**If you see a Dipper, please try and see if it has a ring and colour-ring, and report it, with the location, to Leo Smith (01694 720296 [leo@leosmith.org.uk](mailto:leo@leosmith.org.uk)).**

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks for records and information about Dippers to:-

Pauline Adcock, John Arnfield, Steve Butler, Julie Cowley, Jane Fallows, Bernard Ford, Greg and Sue Forster, Sarah Freeman, John and Anne Hanley, Paul Langford, Dave Pearce, Sue and Steve Rooney, David Stafford, Carolyn Swales, Peter Teague, Andy Trifonoff, Paul Westall and Sandra Whitlock, together with several readers of *Stretton Focus*.

**Leo Smith**

**January 2022**

## Red Grouse Counts on the Long Mynd



### Red Grouse Counts on the Long Mynd

Strettons area Community Wildlife Group and the Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project, supported by the National Trust and Church Stretton Branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society, have organised a Red Grouse count each year since 2011.

Red Grouse are restricted to heathland, and the Long Mynd (and Stiperstones) hold the only population in England between Dartmoor and the Peak District. Nationally, the population is falling, and it is on the *Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern*. The results help the National Trust's management of the heathland to provide suitable habitat.

Unfortunately, the 2020 count had to be cancelled because of the Government's coronavirus restrictions. Volunteers were recruited for 2021, and plans were made for seven counts around sunset on Thursday evenings between 1 April and 13 May. We normally hold a Project Briefing for new participants, but that was not possible this year because of remaining coronavirus restrictions. However, a written brief was provided, and new participants received either a visit to their watch-point to run through a checklist and answer any questions, or a practical on-the-job (socially-distanced) training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record observations, on the first date, 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Previous experience has shown that there is no point in holding counts if the weather is very cold, rainy, or the wind-speed is greater than 10mph. In 2021, the whole survey period was dominated by cold, windy weather, and four of these seven planned counts were cancelled because of poor weather forecasts. Two additional counts were arranged on the very late dates of 18 and 27 May. Several attempts were made to arrange counts on other dates, but these too had to be abandoned because of the weather. The weather conditions meant that there was little grouse activity on any of the five counts that were held, and most observers recorded no grouse on all five dates.

The methodology requires concurrent observations of displaying males, to mark territory boundaries, but there were virtually none of these in 2021, so it has not been possible to produce a population estimate.

### Participants

Thanks are due to the following participants:

David Arbuthnott, John Arnfield, Luke & father Beckett, Adrian Bell, Charlie Bell, Michael Bell, Peter & Chrys Bonds, Carole Booker, Cathy Bowler, David Bowler, Lesley Brown, Keith Burton, Sandy Burton, & Ann Constable, Chris Cooke, Pamela Cusack, Judith Darling, Sylvia Davidson, Gill Davies, Sam Devine-Turner, Pam & husband Dicer, Alastair Edie, Raelene Edwards, John Ellerslie, Roger Evans, Greg Forster, Sue Forster, Jeremy Freeland, Jeremy Freeland, Rob Furlong, Beth Furlong, Joe Gomme, Richard Halahan, John & Heather Hathaway, Janet Hill, Pat Holbourn-Williams, David John, Peter Jones, Liz Knowles, John Knowles, Sarah Lane, Mike & Rachel Lugg, Neil Macdonald, David Matthews, Andrew May, Anna McCann, Andrew Middleton, Susan Nickless, Paul Nottingham, Adrian Pickles, Sue & Steve Rooney, Ray Slack, Leo Smith, David Stafford, Mike Streetly, Geoff Taylor, Lorna Taylor, Keith Vivers, Wendy-Jane Walton, Sandra & Pete Whitlock, Caroline Windley, Carol Wood.





### Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to Lorna Taylor, for organising all the counts and training, and to John Arnfield and David Stafford, for each training a small group of new participants.

### Results from previous years

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
60 – 63	63 – 66	53 – 54	56 – 58	57 - 59	42+	49+	64 – 66	54	No count

### Plans for 2022

The count is being repeated this year. Counts will be held around sunset on seven Thursday evenings 31 March to 14 May. We want as many helpers as possible, please.

A project briefing meeting for new participants will be held on Thursday, 24 March at the National Trust tea rooms in Cardingmill Valley.

For further information, including reports from previous years, see the Community Wildlife Groups website [shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/long-mynd-red-grouse-project/](https://shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/long-mynd-red-grouse-project/) or contact Lorna Taylor (email: [lorna.taylor@btinternet.com](mailto:lorna.taylor@btinternet.com), phone 01694 723301)

**Leo Smith**  
**January 2022**

# Botanical surveys

## Introduction

The focus of the Botanical Group changed in 2021. We are a 'project' of the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group, but our activities are coordinated by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT). In recent years we have spent our time surveying Local Wildlife Sites or potential LWSs. This year, and probably for the next couple of years at least, the priority has shifted towards Local Nature Recovery (LNR) Habitat Mapping.

## The What and Why of LNR Habitat Mapping

Nature needs space and it's not getting it. It's depleted, fragmented and fragile. We need a recovering landscape, with 'more bigger, better and joined-up spaces for nature'. So says the Lawton Report of 2010, and one may wonder what progress has been made since. The cogs of change grind so slowly. We always seem to be waiting; for an Environment Bill, for an Agriculture Bill, for Brexit, for evidence to be gathered, for trials to be completed, for the details of what is to replace the Common Agriculture Policy, and so on. And yet we know nature doesn't wait.

Given so much uncertainty, can we at least get ready for change to happen? What needs to be in place so that when the awaited frameworks and policies emerge, they can be implemented speedily? Well, a core requirement is to know what exists now by way of biodiversity, and this is the *raison d'être* for the Community Wildlife Groups and their emphasis on bio-surveying. Equally fundamental is the lack of detailed knowledge of habitats. The main reason for the decline in biodiversity is the degradation of habitats, so a clearer baseline picture of the current status of Britain's habitats is surely a pre-requisite for nature and landscape recovery. This is not new. The different organisations in the UK conservation community have been saying and doing this for years; but there is now more solidarity of purpose under the banner of the Local Nature Recovery.

*What do we want?* A joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and at sea. One that allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change. One that provides plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed. *When do we want it?* Now.

We know where many of the centres of biodiversity excellence are; the nature reserves, the Local Wildlife Sites, the SSSIs and so forth. And we have some patchy survey data of them. Other centres of biodiversity are not known, and are fragmented. If future action is to be prioritised to restore, recreate, and reconnect habitats for maximum effect, then we need to have a clearer habitat map. Which is why the Wildlife Trusts are focusing on LNR Habitat Mapping.

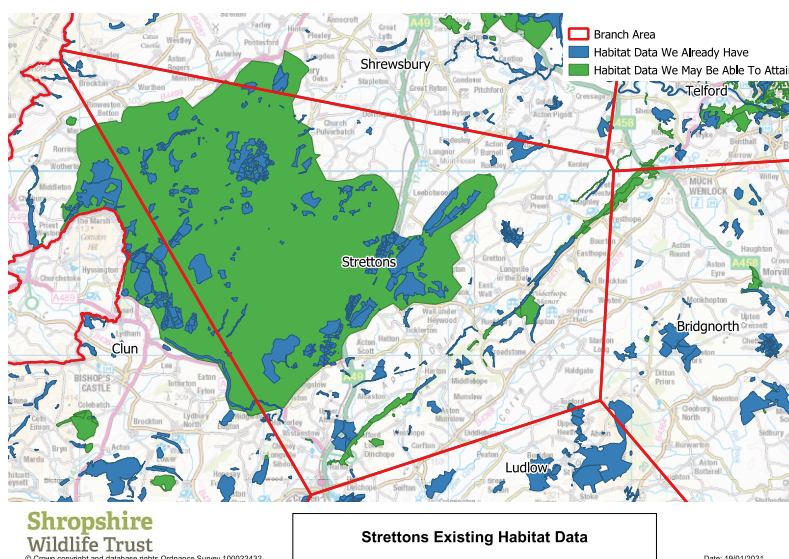


Figure 1: The SWT Strettons Area

## The mapping process

Working with partner organisations, Shropshire Wildlife Trust aims to collate existing data and, where necessary gather fresh data, to habitat map the whole county. SWT is asking its 11 Branches throughout the county to help. The Strettons area covers about 400 monads (1km squares) on the OS map. Over the next few years the Botanical Group aims to map all the monads that need mapping. Some are SSSIs and are well surveyed; for some, there already are data, but it may be dated and need verification.

The UK Habitat (UKHab) Classification system, key and codes include some 51 divisions; many are not found in Shropshire: Marine, Coastal, Estuarine etc. SWT contracted a consultant, Rob Mileto, to contextualise and simplify the classification for Shropshire, and to provide training for Branch group volunteers. This happened in 2021. Covid meant delays and adaptation; some training was provided by zoom. However Rob was able to provide a day's training in the Strettons in late June. We followed that with two group get-togethers, where we walked part of a monad, discussing features and how we would classify and map habitats. So what is the process?



Figure 2: Map for monad SO4697

The group includes about 10 volunteer surveyors. Each volunteer chooses one (or more) monad that has not yet been mapped; as an example, let's take SO4697, around Lower Wood, north of All Stretton. SWT HQ will issue a blank .pdf map of the monad (Fig. 2). It can be useful to start by looking at satellite imagery online;

or with some monads finding a high vantage point with sight over the area. The volunteer walks all the public rights of way - footpaths, bridleways, road verges etc. – and records the habitats present using the UKHab coding system. If the landowner is known and access permission obtained, all well and good, but this is often not possible or practical. **The priority is to find HoPIs, Habitats of Principal Importance.** About 20 different HoPI types are found in Shropshire (Table 1). These are habitat types identified as being the **most threatened and requiring conservation action.**

Volunteers don't map everything; if a field is improved pasture, we mark 'g' for grassland on the map to show it has been surveyed. We are specifically looking for HoPIs, or potential HoPIs, habitats which, with a small change in management, could be restored, and become more species rich. We are looking for connections; where perhaps two HoPIs could be

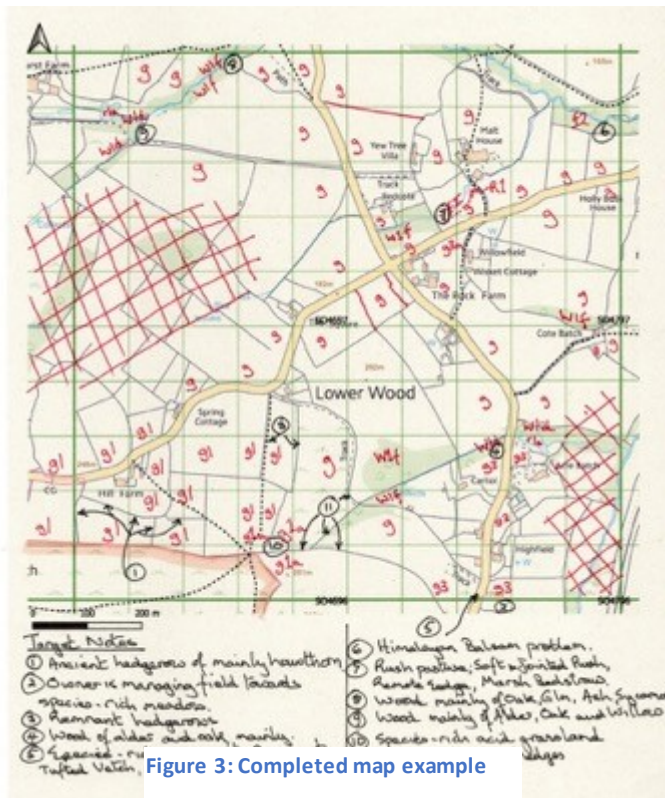


Figure 3: Completed map example



joined together with habitat restoration in between. We make notes of important features; a particularly species-rich, mature hedgerow; an area of grassland where bracken encroachment is shading out ground flora; a woodland with a particularly rich ground flora, etc.

Some areas of the monad are inaccessible. These are marked on the map as such.

**Table 1: Habitats of Principal Importance in Shropshire**

<b>Grasslands and Heathlands</b>	
Lowland meadows	Flower-rich meadow or pasture dependent on low fertility soils and traditional management methods. Important for invertebrates and ground nesting birds such as skylarks. Sensitive to changes in hydrology and nutrient status.
Lowland calcareous grassland	Associated with underlying limestone. Flower-rich in lime-loving plants, important for invertebrates, especially butterflies. Sensitive to change in nutrient status.
Lowland dry acid grassland	Characterized by acid soils derived from sandstone and igneous rocks. Less flower rich but important for rare plants and invertebrates. Mainly found on shallow soils on hills or rocky outcrops.
Heathland	Can be lowland e.g. Prees Heath; in Shropshire more commonly upland (above tree line) dry or wet. Often in a mosaic with acid grassland or wetlands raised bog or flushes. Heather and gorse abundant often with bilberry. Upland wet heaths may be rich in butterworts and asphodels.
<b>Woodlands</b>	
Lowland beech and yew woodland	Where these species form >50% of the canopy, usually on shallower soils. Of high biodiversity value; can be fungi-rich.
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Typically dominated by oak and ash. May have a rich ground flora. Important for bats, woodland birds and butterflies, occasionally with dormice.
Wet woodland	Typically dominated with alder and/or willow species adjacent to waterbodies or part of a wetland mosaic. May support rare invertebrates attracted by dead rotten wood, and otter seeking cover and breeding sites.
Wood-pasture and parkland	With open grown trees, some of which are ancient or veteran. Important for veteran trees, invertebrates and bats.
<b>Wetlands</b>	
Eutrophic lakes	Nutrient rich, maybe abundant in algae. Often important for waterfowl.
Mesotrophic lakes	Moderate nutrient content. Can be rich in plant, invertebrate and amphibian species.
Oligotrophic lakes	Nutrient poor, with clear or brownish water. Rare in Shropshire generally in upland quarries.
Lowland fens	Perhaps floodplain inundated for part of the year. Neutral with lush swamp vegetation dominated by sedges, tall grasses, meadowsweet, yellow iris. May support water vole and otter. Important for rare invertebrates and plants.
Upland flushes and swamps	Flushes, swamps and springs. Shorter vegetation on acid soils. Can be flora rich with mosses inc. sphagnum, rare sedges and sundews.
Reedbed	Dominated by common reed. Important for birds, rare plants, and perhaps water vole.

Lowland raised bog	Peatlands with peat >0.5m deep. Usually dominated by sphagnum and other mosses, cottongrasses, deergrass, cross leaved heath.
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	Tussocky, dominated by purple moor grass and rushes often with marsh bedstraw, water mint, angelica and perhaps orchids.
<b>Other habitats</b>	
Inland rock	Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land.
Traditional orchards	Fruit and nut trees grown at low density in permanent grassland.
Arable field margins	Flower and invertebrate rich edges managed as weedy strips or deliberately planted. Important for invertebrates and farmland birds.

### Analysis and follow-up

When a monad map is completed it is sent to the team at Shropshire Wildlife Trust HQ. Maps will be analysed along with data from other sources. Possible opportunities for habitat restoration or recreation will be prioritised in the light of funding streams such as the emerging Environmental Land Management Scheme and Biodiversity Net Gain criteria for follow-up discussions with landowners.

### The volunteer team

The training in 2021 was disrupted with Covid, but we now have a core of trained surveyors that we hope will be able to move forward apace in 2022. Between us we have taken on 25 of the c.400 monads so there is still a long way to go. Some are working in pairs initially to consolidate skills. Some of the group have reasonable flower ID skills, some are beginners. That's fine, **you don't need to be a flower ID expert to do the mapping!** Some ID skills do help but they're not essential. Training in the process and mapping will be available in 2022. And we hope to also run some 1-day flower ID courses.

If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch.

**Mike Carter**  
Botanical Group Leader  
email: [misawa47@gmail.com](mailto:misawa47@gmail.com)

**Janet Martin**  
SWT Branch Secretary & LNR Coordinator  
email: [jmartin1947@btinternet.com](mailto:jmartin1947@btinternet.com)

# Treasurer's Report

## INTERIM BALANCE SHEET

Period 1 April 2021 to 31 January 2022

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Carry forward from 01.04.21	£1274.99	Remaining 2020 PPL paid out	£546.30
From PPL 2020 transferred to tree planting	£200.00	Wetlands training events bal.	£33.09
Stepping Stones Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant	£3000.00	Birnbeck Insurance	£183.00
		Wetlands invertebrate report	£50.00
		CWG media domain share	£10.00
		Methodist Hall bird survey meeting	£12.00
		GRCF grant electric fence Ragleth	£346.80
		BALANCE IN BANK 31.01.22	£3293.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4474.99</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4474.99</b>

MONIES HELD AS FOLLOWS	31.01.22	31.03.21
Wetlands Project	£62.28	£145.37
Tree Planting Project	£241.02	£41.02
PPL	N/A	£546.30
GRCF	£2653.20	N/A
Undedicated funds	£337.30	£542.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3293.80</b>	<b>£1,274.99</b>



## **ANNUAL BALANCE SHEET**

**Year ending 31 March 2021**

<b>INCOME</b>		<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Carry forward from last year	£1,173.01	Hanscan Ltd wire mesh and staples for Boardwalk	£359.84
AGM donations 2020	£35.25	L. Hutton-Harrop web work (Cudwell meadow)	£407.00
Shropshire Council re: Boardwalk	£360.00	Birnbech NSU insurance	£168.00
Church Council donation	£40.00	Huws & Gray re: bat boxes	£39.91
PPL money, from National Trust	£2,556.00	Crayfish traps balance	£3.48
PPL money (Curlews)	£5000.00	Hedgehogs balance	£9.25
National Trust for insurance	£168.00	CWG Media balance	£0.09
National Trust for insurance	£50.00	L. Smith bird survey balance	£110.00
		PPL money spent to date, general	£1,922.61
		PPL money spent to date, Curlews	£5000
		PPL bird boxes	£87.09
		BALANCE IN BANK 31.03.21	£1274.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£9,382.26</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£9382.26</b>

<b>MONIES HELD AS FOLLOWS</b>	<b>31.03.21</b>	<b>31.03.20</b>
Wetlands Project	£145.37	£552.37
Tree Planting Project	£41.02	£0.18
PPL	£546.30	N/A
Undedicated funds	£542.30	£655.87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1274.99</b>	<b>£1,208.42</b>

**L W Priestley, Treasurer**  
**January 2022**

## Acknowledgements

Some of SACWG's 2021 activities were supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, via the Stepping Stones Project.

