



## Extract From Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group Annual report 2021



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### 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, 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/](http://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)

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