

# Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group

Celebrating wildlife in the Pontesbury, Minsterley, Stiperstones  
and Hope Valley Area



## Annual Report for 2022

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## 1. Introduction

This group was initiated by the Stiperstones-Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) in 2014, covering the area shown in Appendix 1, in order to:-

- Bring together local people interested in wildlife
- Undertake survey work to establish the status of key bird, plant and butterfly species and habitats
- Encourage and enhance local interest in wildlife, and actively promote conservation.

The LPS supported the Group over the four years 2014-17 but in 2018 it was formally established and independently constituted as the Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group (RVCWG).

Anyone can join who lives or works in the area, or has an interest in its wildlife, and who wants to actively contribute to local knowledge and conservation. Membership is free.

Communication with members is largely by email. To contact the group and find out how to get involved, e-mail [reavalleycwg@gmail.com](mailto:reavalleycwg@gmail.com). A Facebook group has also been established, Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group, which can be reached at the following address, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/217959798769947/>.

An Annual Report is published, and posted on the Community Wildlife Groups website [www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk](http://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk). This report brings together information from different surveys which take place in the Rea Valley catchment area.

New activities for the group in 2022 were hosting the Stepping Stones Community Field Visit at the Resting Hill nest box scheme on 12 May 2022 and co-ordinating an evening of moth trapping and identification with the Shropshire Moth Group at The Bog, Stiperstones, on 22 July 2022.

Many of the projects carried out by the RVCWG in 2022 were funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and ForestryCommission.

# Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

The  
National Lottery  
Heritage Fund



Environment  
Agency



## 2. Curlews, Lapwings and Other Birds Survey

By Leo Smith, Bird Group Leader, February 2023

### 2.1 Background

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



The area has been divided up into 26 tetrads (2x2 kilometre squares, each made up of four of the one-kilometre squares shown on Ordnance Survey maps). These tetrads, and their reference code, are shown on the map in Appendix 1.

The survey consists of three visits to each of these tetrads, once during each of three specified two-week periods, around 1st April, 1st May and mid-June. with visits concentrating on habitats where the main target species might be found, and lasting around three hours each. The surveys are 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.

In 2020, coverage was limited due to Government restrictions to limit the spread of coronavirus. However, particular efforts were made to continue to record Curlews. Surveyors were requested to concentrate on Lapwing, Curlew and Kestrel, and any potential Red Kite breeding sites. 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 similar to what was achieved in earlier years, and 23 members spent over 150 hours on the survey. Recording of the Other Target Species resumed.

In 2022, a particular effort was made to involve new members, through publicity in several local community newspapers, and 16 new participants were recruited. In total, 37 participants spent just over 230 hours on the survey, and only two of the survey squares, both of which have been rarely covered, received no coverage. Fifteen target species were recorded. This is the best coverage since the Bird Survey started in 2014.

## 2.2 Curlew

Curlew is the “most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK” (Brown et al, British Birds 2015), because the UK has an estimated 28% of the European, and 19-27% of the world population and is on the national Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (Eaton et al, British Birds 2015), because of a decline of 62% in the UK between 1969 and 2014. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 48% decline in the UK, and a 29% decline in England, over the 25-year period 1995-2020.



In Shropshire, it declined from about 700 breeding pairs in 1990 to 160 in 2010 (a loss of 77%), and it disappeared from 62% of the Atlas survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13. The decline has continued, and there were probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County in 2021. This is almost 30% of the total in southern England (Saving England’s lowland Eurasian Curlews Colwell et al British Birds 2020). At the current rate of decline, the County population will halve in about 12 years, and become virtually extinct in 25. Curlew is on the Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire, published by Shropshire Ornithological Society in 2019.

### 2.21 Survey results

The map below summarises the estimated number and distribution of Curlew territories in the Rea Valley area in 2022.

The methodology requires observations of a pair together, or a territorial display, or a single bird on two of the three surveys, to confirm a territory. However, Curlews often have large territories, and may be seen a kilometre or more from their nest site, so interpretation of the observations is sometimes difficult, unless singing birds are seen or heard concurrently. If that does not happen, the methodology requires the analysis to produce the lowest population estimate consistent with the records, in this case 12 pairs.

Although the area as a whole was less well covered in 2020 than usual, because of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, the areas where Curlews were found in 2019 were as well, or better, covered in 2020. The results from 2020 can therefore be compared with those from earlier years, and provide continuity into 2021 and 2022.

In 2022, there were again two pairs near Hemford (SJ30F).

There were two pairs near Habberley (SJ30W and SJ40B) annually until 2017, but only one in 2018 and 2019, the loss of a pair. However, there were two pairs there again in 2020, only three birds (1 pair) in 2021, and two pairs in 2022.

Two pairs were also located again in SJ30K, one in the south, between Santley and Lower Santley, and another near Capsall. Two pairs have occupied this square on a regular basis, although previous reports have suggested different numbers in some years.

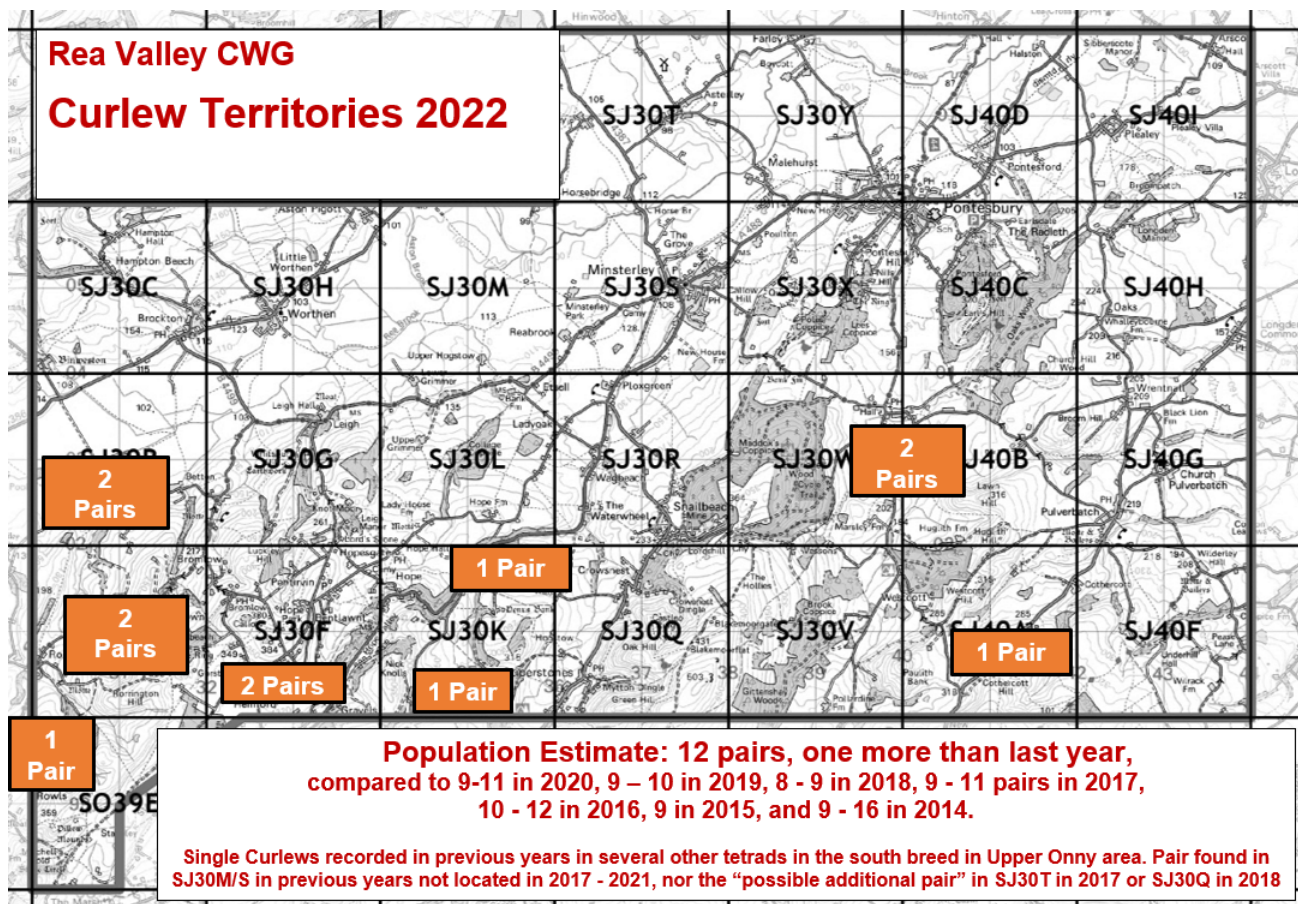
In 2021, 3 - 4 pairs were seen in SJ30B, an increase on the two pairs usually seen there in previous years. In 2022, a large number were seen arriving in late April (11 and 14, on different dates). Two separate breeding pairs were identified, but unfortunately no later visits were made to try and locate any other breeding pairs.

Two pairs were located in SJ30A. One individual was recorded in 2015, but this square has not been surveyed since, prior to this year. Another pair was reported from the very north-west corner of SO39E, which has also not been well surveyed previously. This pair may actually nest in SO29Z, in the Camlad area, where it was seen in late May. It is possible that these Curlews were present in previous years, and local people will be asked for information to try and ascertain this.

One pair was seen near Cothercott Hill (SJ40A) in early April, and one was heard calling nearby on 15 May. It is likely that this represents another pair, as Curlews have been found there in previous years.

The 2019 report stated that “None were found in any of the other areas where there were “Possible Additional Pairs” in previous years”. No records have been received from any of these areas in 2020 or later years, so there might have been “Possible Additional Pairs”, before 2019, but not since then.

Again, there is no evidence that any young Curlews fledged in the area.



## 2.22 Population Trend

Table 1 shows the estimated number of pairs found in each year since 2014, and the chart shows the annual trends. In most years the number of pairs has not been established precisely, so a range has been given, and the chart is based on the mid-point of each range. The low point in 2018 is common to all the CWG surveys, attributed to the “beast from the east”, which resulted in the grass not growing to produce cover for nests, and probably made it more difficult for females to get into breeding condition. The apparent increase in 2019 is likely to be the result of better breeding conditions, rather than a real increase in the population. The population did increase in 2020, as a second pair returned to the Habberley area. This additional pair was not re-found in 2021, but was present in 2022.

However, 3-4 pairs in 2021, and 2 – 3 pairs in 2020, rather than the usual two, were found in SJ30B. It is not known if this was due to improved coverage by new surveyors from 2020, or a genuine increase in the square’s population at excellent habitat in the vicinity of Marton Pool. Only two breeding pairs were found there in 2022.

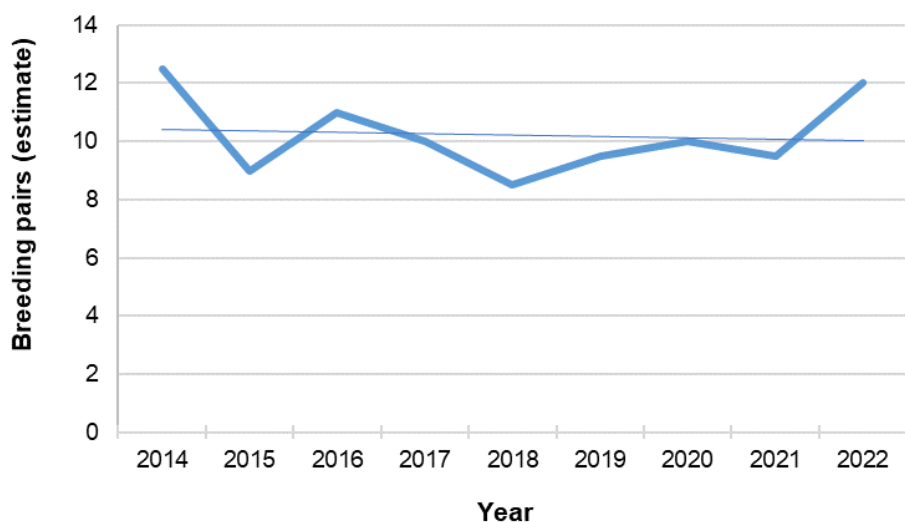
Establishing trends is not easy, as some squares have not been surveyed every year, and others have been covered by different surveyors. The impact of finding two pairs in SJ30A, properly surveyed for the first time in 2022, and a new pair in SO39E, in part of the square not well covered in previous years, has affected the trend line. It is not known if these pairs have been present in previous years, but overlooked. Attempts will be made to ascertain this.

However, it is known that at least one pair has been lost in the area since 2014. Local residents near Hemford (SJ30F) had been monitoring the return of Curlews to their breeding grounds for many years, but in 2015 only five, rather than the usual six, returned – the loss of a breeding pair. Two pairs have been found there in each year since.

This, taken together with the trend chart, suggests a net decline of at least one pair, around 10%, since 2014.

**Table 1. Curlew population 2014 – 22**

Year	Number of Curlew pairs
2014	9-16
2015	9
2016	10-12
2017	9-11
2018	8- 9
2019	9-10
2020	10
2021	9-10
2022	12





**From the observations and analysis, it is estimated that the Curlew population in the area in 2022 was 12 breeding pairs, a net loss of at least one pair since 2014.**

### **2.23 Recording Curlew Nest Sites**

To improve the value of CWG Curlew surveys, nest site habitat data is being collected to feed into the database being developed by the South of England Curlew Forum. Observers have been requested to complete a questionnaire for every case where a nest was found, or the field containing the nest was identified beyond reasonable doubt.

### **2.24 Colour-ringing**

Around 200 wild Curlews have been caught and colour-ringed by the Mid-Wales Ringing Group since March 2015 at the Dolydd Hafren Montgomery Wildlife Trust Reserve on the River Severn near Welshpool, mainly on spring migration as they make their way back to breeding sites. All the “headstarted” chicks released by Curlew Country near the Stiperstones since 2017, and a large number at autumn and wintering sites in Wales, have also been colour-ringed.



An example of the colour-rings can be seen in this photo, taken in the Upper Clun in 2017.

Colour-ringed wild Curlews have been found breeding in the area, at least two near Marton, and near Hemford. However, most individuals were not observed closely enough to see whether they were colour-ringed or not. All these Curlews were caught and ringed at Dolydd Hafren MWT reserve near Welshpool, in March on their way back to their breeding areas. No headstarted Curlews have been found.

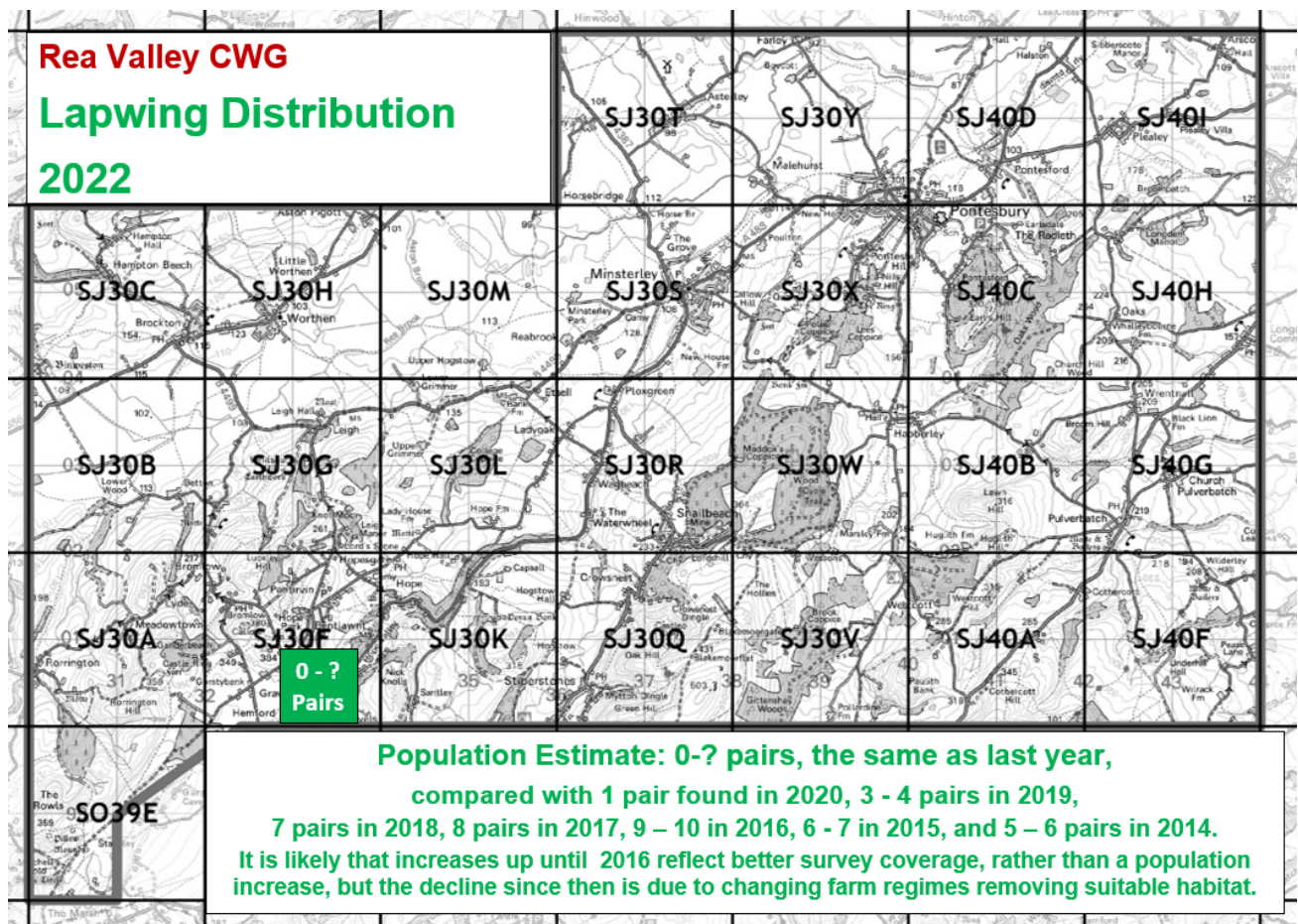
### **2.3 Lapwing**



Lapwing was added to the national Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in 2009, and this status was confirmed in 2015 (Eaton et al, British Birds 2015), because of a decline in the UK of 63% between 1969 and 2014, and 57% over the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found declines of 48% in the UK, 34% in England and 51% in the English West Midlands, over the 25-year period 1995-2020.

In Shropshire, it declined from about 3,000 breeding pairs in 1990 to 800 in 2010 (a loss of 73%), and it disappeared from 46% of the Atlas survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13. The decline has continued, certainly in the areas monitored by several Community Wildlife Groups. Lapwing is on the Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire. The decline is partly obscured by the much larger numbers seen in winter flocks, which comprise birds escaping from the frozen ground in northern Europe.

The map summarises the estimated number and distribution of breeding Lapwings in the Rea Valley area. It also shows the cumulative results of all eight previous Surveys.



Lapwings need short vegetation or bare ground to nest on, and those that nest on arable land have to move round to follow the farm crop rotation. The previously-regular breeding site in SJ30L was initially occupied by two pairs in 2020, and three pairs were seen at another site in the south-west corner of the same square, but none were seen on the survey visit on 7 April, or subsequently. No Lapwings were seen there in 2021 or 2022, as no suitable breeding habitat remained.

The site in SJ30H, which was re-occupied in 2019, has been vacant since 2020 as a result of land management changes on the farm, which have removed the suitable habitat.

These were the only two sites found to be occupied in the three years up until 2019. Pairs were found in some years prior to 2017 north of Minsterley. These areas were not covered in 2020, but they were in 2021 and 2022, and no Lapwing were found.

In 2021, a single Lapwing, which may have been sitting on a nest, was found near a small pool in SJ30B on 6 May, but no Lapwings were seen there on the other two survey visits.

In 2022, Lapwings were heard calling near Hemford on 5 April, but not located. No Lapwings were seen or heard in the square on other visits. It is not known if the Lapwings were part of breeding pairs or not, and, if so, whether they were in this area, or the nearby Upper Onny area.

The apparent increase in population, year on year up until 2016, is likely to be due to better survey coverage, rather than an increase in Lapwings. Some squares have not been covered every year, so establishing trends is difficult. However, it does appear that the population has declined since 2016, and the number found in 2022 was the lowest yet.

**Lapwings were heard near Hemford (SJ30F) in early April, but not located subsequently. They may have been breeding, but it is not known. One Lapwing was found in 2021, and only one breeding pair was found in 2020, the previous lowest.**

## 2.4 Anecdotal Evidence for the Decline of Lapwing and Curlew

Members of the Bird Group who live in the area, and other local residents, have said that Lapwings and Curlews are less common now than they used to be. In previous years, some members talked to local farmers in the course of their surveys, and they too said that Lapwings and Curlews are less common now than they used to be. Lapwings have apparently declined much more than Curlews.

## 2.5 Kestrel

Kestrel is on the national *Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4* (Eaton et al, 2015), because of a decline in the UK of 46% between 1969 and 2014, and 33% over the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found declines of 40% in the UK, 26% in England and 41% in the English West Midlands region, over the 25-year period 1995-2020.

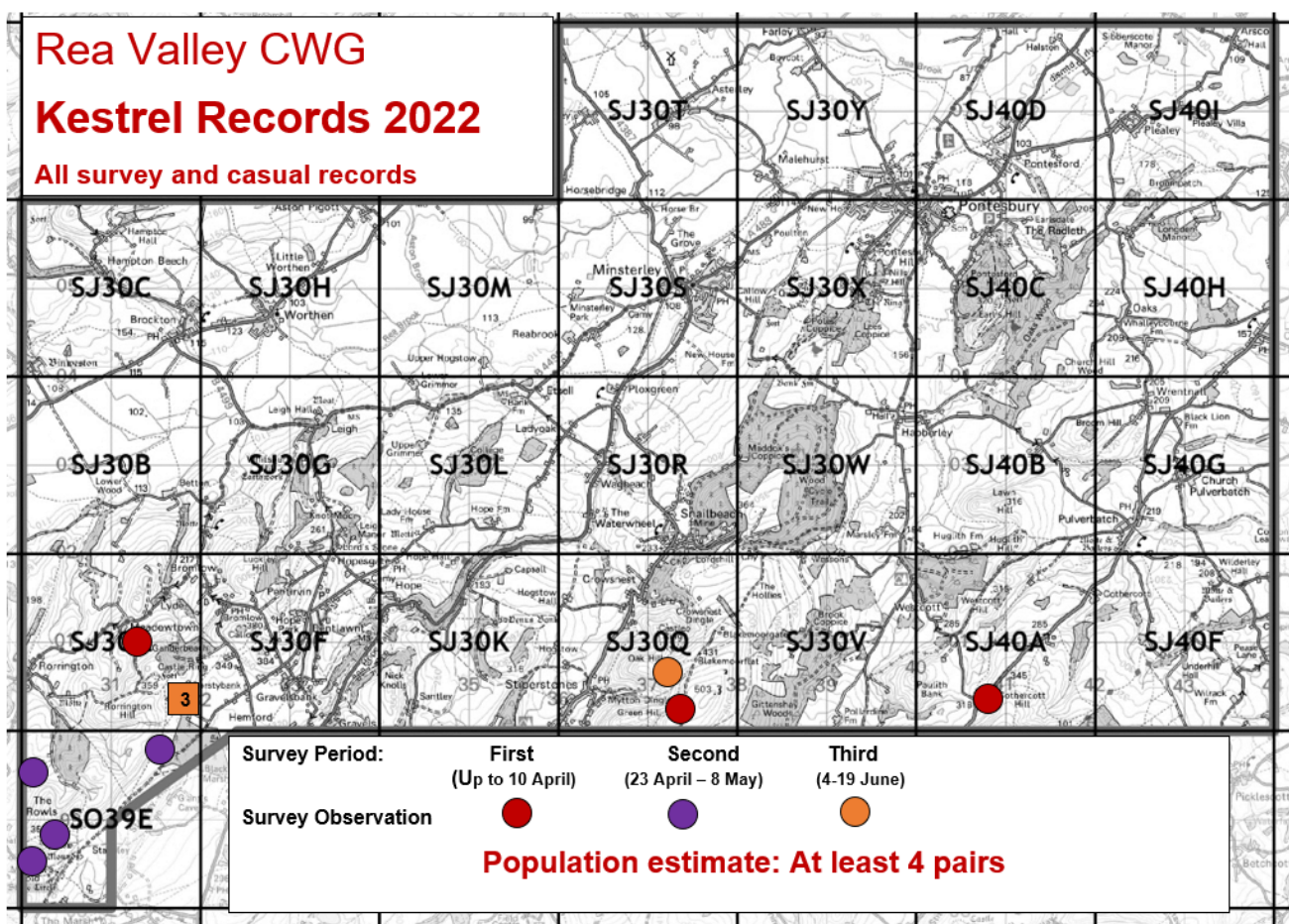
In Shropshire, records of confirmed or probable breeding declined by 46% in the 870 Atlas survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13, and the population probably halved in that time. Kestrel is on the *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*.



Kestrels defend a small territory around the nest, but their home range, where they find most of their food, is at least 1 km square, but can be as large as 10 km square. Most hunting is carried out within 1.8km of the nest, but the home range is often partly shared with neighbouring pairs.

The local decline appears to have continued in recent years, and the Shropshire Ringing and Raptor Groups have launched a nest box scheme to help improve breeding success, and try and find out the reasons for the decline. To help get a better understanding of the population and distribution, members doing CWG surveys have been asked to make a special effort to record Kestrels.

The population varies from year to year, depending on prey abundance, mainly voles, but Kestrels are much more likely to be observed in good breeding seasons, when they have to spend more time hunting for food for chicks, and travelling to and from the nest. In 2019, the numbers of Kestrels seen was much lower in all the CWG areas than in 2018, suggesting that 2019 was a very poor year for them. 2020 appeared to have been generally better, but 2021 was another very poor year, probably due to the persistent cold and dry northerly winds in April and May, which delayed the growing season and reduced the availability of prey.



Observations in the Rea Valley area in 2022 are shown on the Map. It is likely that the dots represent four pairs, compared to 2 – 3 pairs last year, and around five in 2020. No nest sites were found, nor were any fledged young reported, although young would not have fledged until after the main survey period ended in mid-June. There were three observations on the western side of Stapeley Hill during the late April survey, presumably of a pair that nested near the traditional nest site just to the west of SO39E. There were two confirmed, and five probable, breeding records in these tetrads in the Shropshire Bird Atlas 2008-13.

## 2.6 Cuckoo

Cuckoo has declined considerably in recent years, and was added to the *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in the UK* in 2009. By 2015 the decline had reached 60% in the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found declines of 34% in the UK, 71% in England, and 81% in the English West Midlands region, between 1995 and 2020.

In Shropshire, comparison of the 1985-90 and 2008-13 Atlas distribution maps showed it had disappeared from 56% of the tetrads occupied in the earlier period. The population estimate for the later period published in *The Birds of Shropshire* was 90–95 pairs, less than half that estimated in the earlier Atlas.

It is one of the Other Target Species that members have been asked to record each year, but in 2020 there were more Cuckoo records than usual. It was not clear whether there were actually more Cuckoos about, or that people were better able to hear them in the peace and quiet, or were at home rather than work, because of the coronavirus lockdown. Members were therefore specifically encouraged to submit Cuckoo records, and the results are shown on the map.

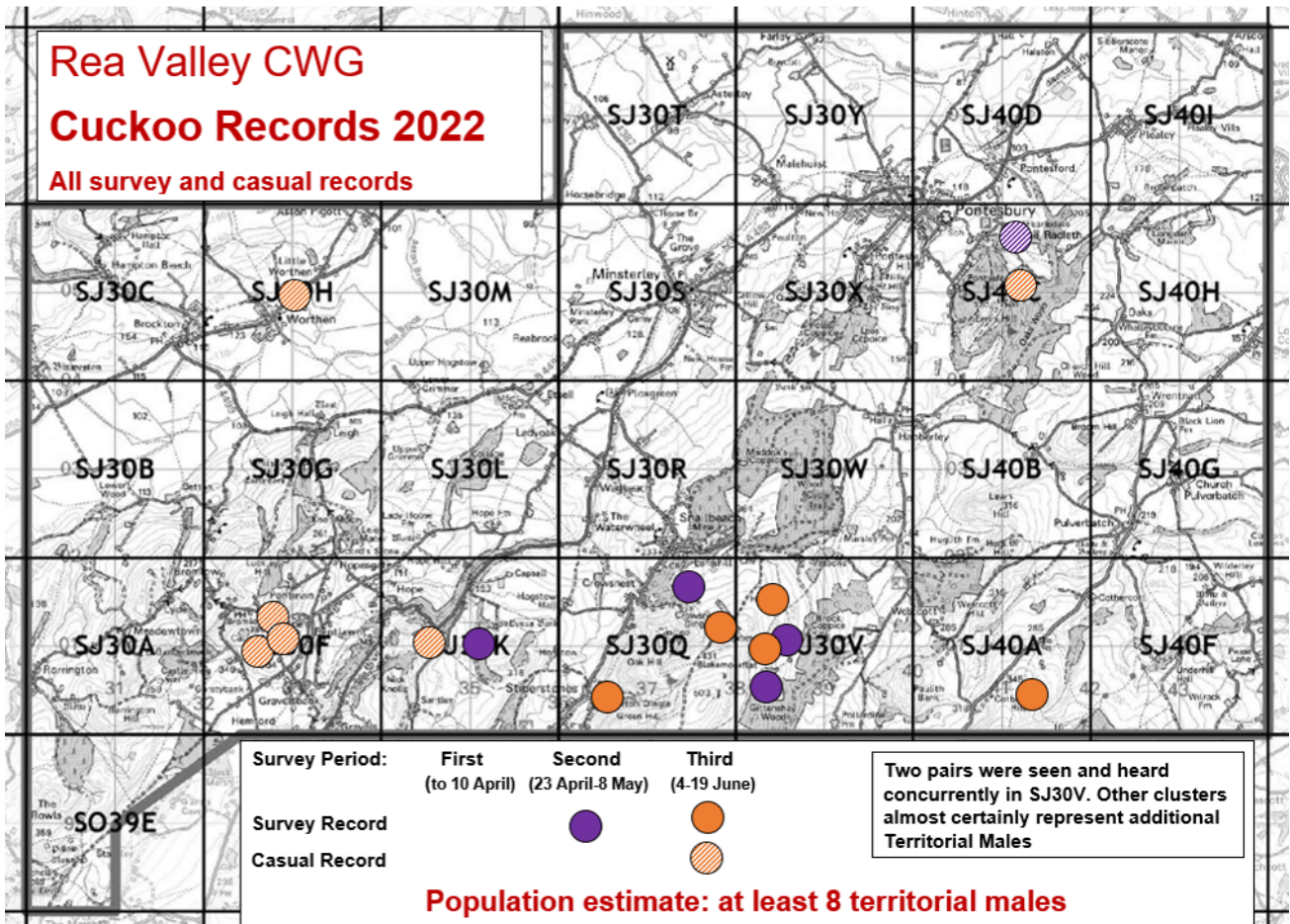


The characteristic Cuckoo call is made only by the male, and he defends a “song territory” to attract females and deter other males. The female has a different, rarely heard, “bubbling call”. Each male will chase other males out of his home patch, but the cuckoo isn't strongly territorial, and several males and females have been found to share overlapping ranges.

Each female lays between 10 and 25 eggs per year, each in a different nest. Each female usually selects nests of a single host species, most frequently Meadow Pipit, Dunnock or Reed Warbler.

The home range of each female varies considerably, depending on the ease of finding enough nests of the host species (i.e., parts of the home range will not be suitable breeding habitat for the host species, and the home range needs to include feeding areas for the Cuckoo as well). Thus, the females’ home range might overlap the song territory of more than one male, and she will mate with each of them (an estimate of “breeding pairs” would therefore be better termed “male territories”).

In 2022, there were eight single records, or clusters. Two pairs were seen and heard concurrently in SJ30V, on the edge of the Stiperstones, and the other clusters probably each related to a single male. It appears that there were at least 8 territorial males present. This is the most ever recorded, and is partly due to casual records being received from readers of Community Newsletters, and from new surveyors improving the coverage.



There were only two records in 2021, from the north-east quadrant of SJ30Q, and the adjacent south-west quadrant of SJ30W, which might have been the same bird. The population estimate in 2021 was therefore 1 – 2 territorial males, considerably less than the exceptional 6 – 7 in 2020, which was substantially more than recorded in previous years. This was attributed to the peace and quiet due to people working from home, and exercising from home, during the coronavirus restrictions. In 2019, a casual record was received of one heard somewhere in the vicinity of Upper Vessons Farm, in SJ30V. In 2018, only one was recorded, in SJ30F; while one was recorded in each of two tetrads in 2017, one in 2016 and two in 2015.

### 2.7 Red Kite

At least 37 Red Kites were seen in 14 tetrads, compared with 12 in six tetrads in 2021, reflecting the rapid increase in sightings in recent years.

Three nests were found in the area, the most since the first nest in 2017.



Given the rapid spread and population increase (58 nests found, and another 9 pairs found, in Shropshire in 2022 – the first successful breeding for 130 years occurred as recently as 2006), it is likely that more widespread breeding will become a regular occurrence in the near future.

## 2.8 Other Target Species

Apart from the five main Target Species listed above, members were also asked to record 19 Other Target species, if they wanted to do so: 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 detailed results are shown in Appendix 3. A summary is shown in Table 2.

Note that members were asked to record individual birds, not pairs (so at some locations both the birds in the pair were recorded, and in the final survey some recently fledged juveniles may have been recorded as well).

**Table 2. Other Target Species – Summary**

Tetrad	Number of Each Species Recorded (Individual Birds)										
	Kestrel	Red Kite	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnock	Wheat-ear	Stone-chat	Linnet	Bull-finch	Yellow-hammer
SJ30 A	(Square not surveyed)										
SJ30 B			2								
SJ30 C	(Square not surveyed)										
SJ30 F	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ30 G		2	1								
SJ30 H			5								
SJ30 K			3				1		6		1
SJ30 L	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ30 M	(Square not surveyed)										
SJ30 Q			4	29	1		3	6			
SJ30 R	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ30 S			2								
SJ30 T			2			2					
SJ30 V	1	1		4							
SJ30 W	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ30 X	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ30 Y		1									
SJ40 A	1		4	1	1	1					1
SJ40 B	1		2						2		
SJ40 C	(Square not surveyed)										
SJ40 D		1									
SJ40 F	(None of these target species recorded)										
SJ40 G		4	5			4		2		1	
SJ40 H		3									
SJ40 I	(None of these target species recorded)										
SO39 E	(None of these target species recorded)										
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Squares</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

The summary table shows the maximum count for each species on any one survey in each tetrad. This may under-record some species, but the alternative – adding all the counts together – would lead to considerable double or triple counting of some individual birds.

As expected in a survey of this type, the expertise of members, and the time they had available to undertake the surveys, varied considerably. The survey squares also vary considerably, in accessibility and terrain. The “detectability” of the birds themselves also varies considerably, according to prevailing weather conditions, time of day, stage in the breeding cycle, and normal behaviour of each species. Thus, the survey results will give an indication of the species that are present, and perhaps their habitat preferences, but only a very small proportion will have been recorded.

Only counts of Meadow Pipit on The Stiperstones, and Skylark and Meadow Pipit on Stapeley Hill, were notable, and only Red Kite and Skylark were recorded in more than half of the squares (Curlew was found in just under half). Several surveyors made little or no attempt to record the Other Target Species. Density of Skylarks on Stapeley Hill is high by national standards.

Fourteen target species were recorded. Eight were not recorded at all: Barn Owl, Dipper, Snipe, Spotted Flycatcher, Swift (nest sites), Tree Sparrow, Whinchat, and Yellow Wagtail.

No Swift nest sites were reported, but the habitats visited by surveyors, to look for the main target species, do not hold many suitable Swift breeding sites. Swifts are on the *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*, and a Species Recovery Action Plan has been drawn up. A new project, to locate Swift breeding sites, was initiated in 2021 and repeated in 2022. It is described later.

## **2.9 Nest Box Schemes**

The Group initiated a Barn Owl project in 2015, with the intention of installing nest boxes at locations where owls were seen, but very few reports were received in the five years 2015-19, so the effort to systematically seek out Barn Owl records has been abandoned.

### **2.91 Resting Hill**

A nest box scheme for woodland birds, particularly Pied Flycatcher, in the Stiperstones valleys at Resting Hill, has been developed since 2015, initially with funding from the Landscape Partnership Scheme. A full separate report on this project appears elsewhere in this Annual Report.

### **2.92 Pontesford Hill**

Another nest box scheme has operated on Pontesford Hill (Lower Camp and Woodland) since 2016, which is now supported by the Friends of Pontesbury Hill and Earls Hill, but is run by those doing the work. This year, 2022, is the seventh year of operation. Because of the loss of some of the original boxes and the poor state of some of the others, new boxes were installed to bring the number of boxes up to 25.



There were 9 weekly checks made, from 12th April to 7th June inclusive. The weather was good initially but became cooler and food for the chicks was harder for the parents to find resulting in some of the weaker chicks dying.

Despite this 68 fledged from 15 boxes, a record number of fledglings for this site. Two of the nests were unsuccessful which gives an average fledged per nest of 5.23. The only downside is that they were all Blue Tits. For the first time there were no Great Tits or any other species using the boxes.



### 2.93 Habberley Brook area

In 2020, a new nest box scheme was initiated alongside the upper reaches of Habberley Brook and The Rea, primarily aimed at Pied Flycatcher and Redstart. Fifty-six boxes were made and installed. A further 16 boxes were installed before the start of the 2021 season.

Agreement was reached last year with three more landowners to extend the scheme along the Habberley Brook and in adjacent areas, with around 80 new boxes, and another site was added. The 2022 results of all these schemes are shown in Table 3.

The occupancy rate has been excellent, and presence of Pied Flycatcher at three sites, Redstart at two sites, and two pairs of Marsh Tits using boxes, is very gratifying.

**Table 3. Nest Box Scheme Results (Habberley Brook Area)**

Species	Bank Farm	Huglith Farm	Meadow House	New Barns	Pollardine Farm	Brook Vessons	The Hollies
Blue Tit	9	5	6	5	11	3	0
Great Tit	3	3	3	7	9	3	1
Unidentified Tit	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Pied Flycatcher	0	3	0	0	8	2	0
Redstart	0	0	0	1	2	0	2
Marsh Tit	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nuthatch	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wren	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Occupancy</b>							
Total no of boxes	31	41	40	24	88	16	33
Total occupied	13	12	9	13	34	9	4

<b>Ringling</b>							
Pied Flycatcher Adults		3			5	1	1
Pied Flycatcher Chicks		6			38		
Redstart Adults					2		1
Redstart Chicks				6	14		12
Survey date (s)	22/05/22	16/05/22	17/05/22	22/05/22	19-21/05/22	15/05/22	Not known

## 2.94 Earl's Hill SWT Reserve

There is another nest-box scheme in the area, on the SWT reserve at Earl's Hill, operated by a different ringer. The CWG has no direct involvement in this scheme, but some members help with this scheme too, and its results are summarised in this report for completeness.

This year's breeding season was much better than 2021 with occupancy up. However it must be born in mind that several old boxes which had not been used for several consecutive seasons were removed in early March, so the number of available boxes was reduced by about ten leaving just 23 up in the wood. The removed boxes have been repaired and will be put back up next year, hopefully in the scree slope area looking up the bank so that they cannot be seen from the paths to prevent theft and unwanted interference.

Once again, the Pied Flycatchers returned with 5 pairs using the boxes: this appears to be about the norm. All 5 pairs were successful with two broods of 9 being recorded compared to the usual 6-7. One bird ringed as nestling in 2021 was caught breeding in a nest box just down the road at Snailbeach by the Shropshire Ringing Group, this again shows the birds returning to their natal area the following year from fledging. There are several nest box schemes run in nearby woods by other ringers so hopefully we will get more birds caught in subsequent years in the surrounding area.

Blue Tits made a strong recovery after last year's poor return with 10 pairs using the boxes and all having successful outcomes, Great Tits on the other hand were almost non-existent with just one pair using the boxes. I do believe the large number of natural sites has a lot to do with this as when walking through the wood you cannot miss seeing a Great Tit!

We had 16 boxes out of 23 occupied giving a rate of nearly 70% once again though occupancy tailed off the further you went into the wood hence the decision to switch boxes to the more open areas where nest sites are at more of a premium and the birds are likely to use the boxes.

The Dipper boxes were not used this year either by the Dippers or Grey Wagtails. We usually have two pairs of Dippers on the brook but only the pair by the waterfall have nested these last couple of years. This year a brood of 4 were ringed and the female caught, who was ringed at the same spot as an adult in 2017, making her at least 6 years old, which is a good age for a Dipper.

## 2.10 Swift

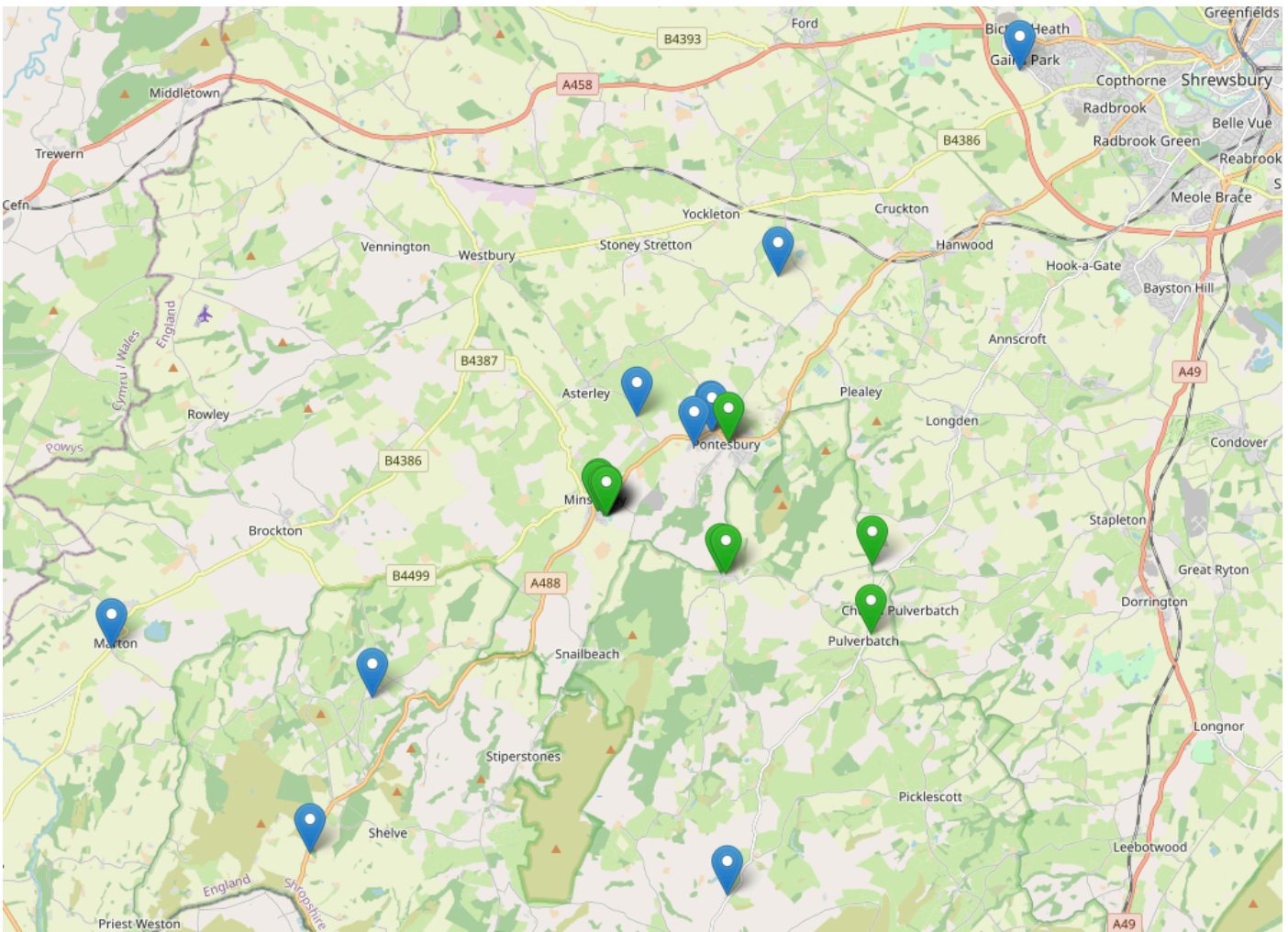
The Swift (*Apus apus*) is a rapidly declining breeding bird in the UK and is listed on the *Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the Red List for Birds (2021)* and red-listed in Shropshire.

This is the second year that the RVCWG has run the 'Swift Watch' programme, again in partnership with the Shropshire Swift Group. Although 'Swift Champions' were not appointed in 2022, swift sightings were requested from all of our membership and these were collated, mapped (see below) and reported to the Shropshire Swift Group. The main objective was to find and report evidence of nesting.

A total of 31 sightings were provided by 7 volunteers for 18 locations across this region of Shropshire. All data has been reported to the Shropshire Swift Group.

The sightings obtained for the RVCWG catchment area have been plotted on a map (Map 1) to show the spatial distribution of the records. The blue pins show where 'feeding' and 'screaming' parties were seen and the best evidence of nesting is shown by the green pins. The lack of sightings in the Rea Valley has been noted, particularly for Brockton and Worthen, where swifts have been known to have bred in previous years.

**Map 1**



The main concentrations of nesting related sightings were in the villages of Minsterley, Pontesbury, Habberley and Pulverbatch. As a consequence of the cluster of sightings reported in the vicinity of Minsterley, a 'Swift Stroll' was organised for an evening in July with Carol Wood of the Shropshire Swift Group to identify specific swift nesting sites. This was done by observing swifts entering buildings under the eaves at dusk. It is estimated that up to 33 swift nests have been identified during the RVCWG 'Swift Watch' in 2022.

The swift sighting records that were provided during the 2022 season, particularly those relating to swift nest sites, have been assessed by Suzanne Wykes of the Ecology team at [shropshire.gov.uk](http://shropshire.gov.uk). This team ensures that ecological factors are taken into account when screening planning applications. The swift nesting records will be used to help ensure the protection of swift nest sites as well as contributing to our understanding of where swifts currently nest. This was one of our key objectives when we started 'Swift Watch'.

We hope to expand our coverage within the RVCWG catchment area in 2023 and carry out further organised 'Swift Strolls' around our villages. Thank you to everyone who provided records and to Carol Wood for supporting this RVCWG programme.

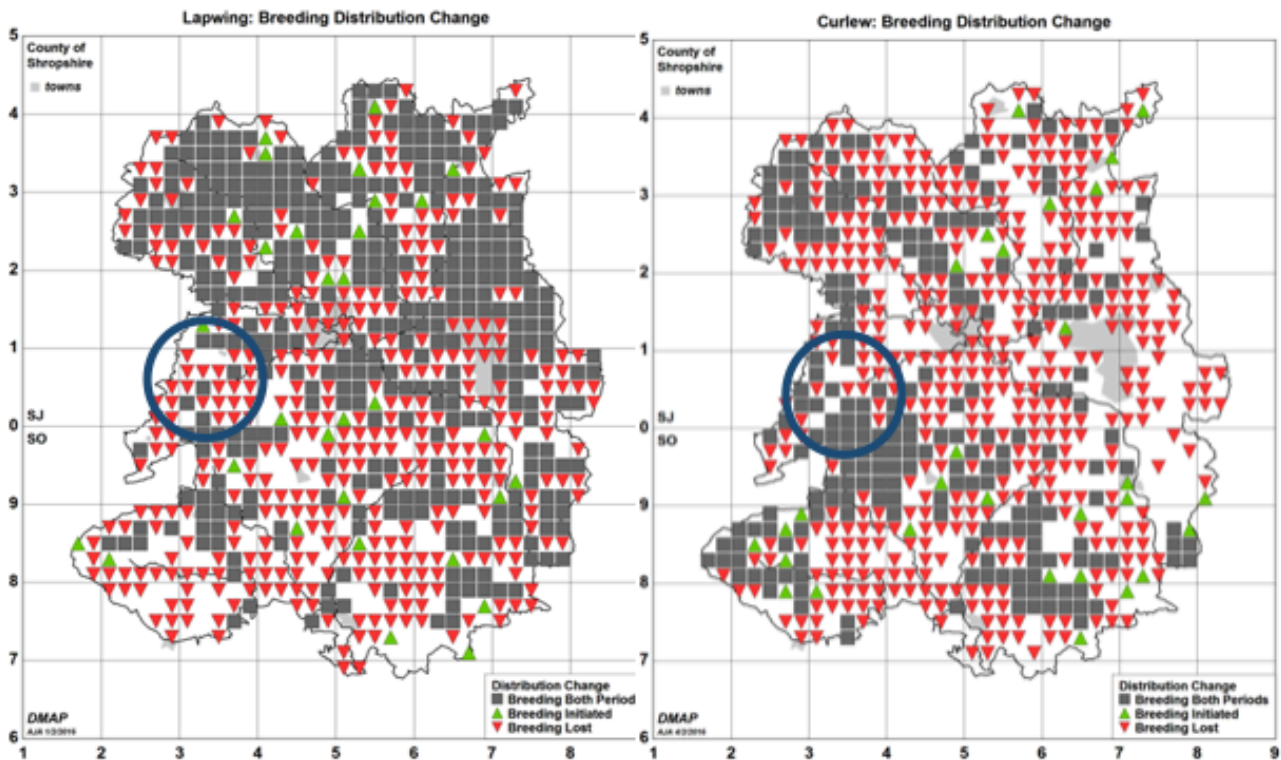
### **3. Curlew Conservation**

#### **3.1 Decline of Lapwing and Curlew**

Lapwing and Curlew are in decline, across the UK, in England and Wales, and in Shropshire. Objective evidence for the local decline comes from Bird Atlas work. The distribution maps showing the results of the recent 2008-13 Bird Atlas, published in *The Birds of Shropshire (2019)*, can be compared with the maps in *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire*, based on six years fieldwork 1985-90, and published in 1992. Both sets of maps have been compiled on the same basis, with similar amounts of fieldwork effort, so the massive decline is undoubtedly real.

The maps show tetrads where each species was found in both Atlas surveys (grey squares) and tetrads where it was found in the earlier period, but not the more recent period (red downward triangles). The Rea Valley CWG area is shown approximately by the blue circles.

Surveys including counts complement these maps. The county Lapwing population has fallen from about 3,000 pairs in 1990 to only about 800 now. The Curlew population has fallen from about 700 pairs in 1990 to about 160 pairs in 2010 (a decline of over 73% for both species).



Other evidence for the decline of Lapwing and Curlew, including the BBS results quoted above, can be found on the website of the British Trust for Ornithology [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org).

Conservation Action is also being taken nationally to reverse the decline of these two species. Both have been designated as UK Biodiversity Priority Species by the Government, as part of its commitment to international biodiversity targets, precisely because of the rapid decline, and both species are now on the *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4*, published in December 2015.

Both species nest on farmland, and recent and current agri-environment schemes have included rewards for farmers for sensitive management of habitat on their farms, and providing other environmental benefits. Farmers can apply for funding to maintain the habitat requirements of a number of birds, including Lapwing and Curlew, if they bred on or near the farm, or used land there for feeding. Many farms in the area will benefit from HLS agreements for 10 years from the date of signing, the last in 2014.

The Government has recently announced (January 2023) the arrangements for the main Agri-environment Scheme to replace the European Union Common Agricultural Policy. The Sustainable Farming Incentive - a key part of the Government's Environmental Land Management Schemes - will provide farmers with a diverse range of paid actions to manage hedgerows for wildlife, plant nectar-rich wildflowers and manage crop pests without the use of insecticides. This includes nine standards, meaning farmers can receive payment for actions on hedgerows, grassland, arable and horticultural land, pest management, nutrient management, and improve soil health and moorlands.

It is hoped that such schemes will help reverse the decline of these species.

## 3.2 Recommendations

*Natural England is recommended to encourage farmers with breeding Lapwing or Curlew on or near their land to join Countryside Stewardship, utilising the appropriate options to maintain and enhance the habitat for these priority species*

### 3.3 Curlew Country

The Stiperstones-Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) operated a Curlew Recovery Project in the area from 2014 to 2017. Fieldwork research established that almost all nests were predated (more than half by foxes), and when the nests were protected with electric fencing, most nests survived but productivity didn't improve because the chicks were predated before fledging.

The LPS ended in March 2018, but the Curlew project has continued, under the name "Curlew Country". It has concentrated on the trialling of "headstarting". This involves removing eggs from Curlew nests, incubating them artificially, rearing chicks in captivity, and then releasing them into the wild after they fledge, at or near a potential breeding site. It is considered to be a short term measure to try to boost the Curlew population while discovering the appropriate measures to improve breeding success to the level needed for recovery. Under a Natural England licence, seven Curlew chicks were reared and released in 2017, 21 in 2018 and 33 in 2019. While this has been a successful technique for other species, it is not known whether our local Curlew chicks will survive and return to their natal area to breed. However, if it does work it is expected to lead to a significant short-term increase in the local Curlew population.

Curlews generally stay on their wintering grounds during their first year, and return to their natal area to breed when they are two years old, and wild Curlew survival rate to two years old is 36% (Rob Robinson, BTO, *pers.com*) (i.e. we could reasonably expect 36% of the 61 headstarted birds (i.e. 21 birds) released 2017-19 to return by 2021).

The whole of the Curlew Country area is within the area covered by three CWGs, Upper Onny, Rea Valley and Camlad Valley, and there is no evidence from the 2021 or 2022 surveys of the three groups that that number of Curlews has come back to the area, so results so far are not encouraging. The location of any pairs of Curlew found by the Bird Survey will be passed on to the Curlew Country fieldworkers to check for colour-rings..

### 3.4 Other Community Wildlife Groups

The first Group, the Upper Onny Wildlife Group, first surveyed Lapwing and Curlew in 2004, and has done so every year since. Upper Clun CWG started in 2007, Kemp Valley in 2009, Clee Hill CWG in 2012, and Rea Valley and Camlad CWGs (part of the Stiperstones-Corndon HLF-funded Landscape Partnership Scheme) in 2014. Strettons Area CWG was launched in 2012, and surveyed Lapwing and Curlew for the first time in 2017. The Three Parishes CWG, covering Weston Rhyn, St. Martin's and

Gobowen (north of Oswestry), also undertook a Bird Survey in 2017. All these groups continued with a Lapwing and Curlew survey in 2018, when they were joined by new CWGs covering Oswestry south (Tanat to Perry) and Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence. A further Group, centred on Abdon (near Brown Clee), also started in 2018, the initiative of a local resident.

All these groups (except Kemp Valley, which has no breeding Curlews) continued with their annual surveys in 2019, and each year since. Clee Hill and Abdon extended their areas, to close the gap between them and monitor known additional Curlew territories. Between them, the 10 groups cover around three-quarters of the County's breeding Curlews. They covered 267 survey squares (tetrads), totalling 1,048 square kilometres. There are about 300 participants each year, who spent a total of more than 2,000 hours on survey work, and around 100 Curlew territories are monitored. This is a clear indication of the concern that local people have for the decline of Curlew, and their willingness to support action to do something about it.

The Curlew distribution map from the County Bird Atlas 2008-13, overlain with the Community Wildlife Group areas, and their 2019 results, can be found on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

The Groups all also survey Lapwing, but they monitor a much smaller proportion of the County population, which is concentrated in north and north-east Shropshire.

In 2020, it is believed that only one of the 100 or so pairs of Curlew monitored produced any fledged young, and none are known to have fledged in 2021. Results for 2022 are still being compiled, but again around 100 pairs were monitored. Results will be posted on the website as they become available.

Further information can be found on the joint website for all the Community Wildlife Groups in Shropshire, [www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk](http://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk)

### **3.5 The SOS Save our Curlews Campaign and 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.

The project is expensive, and has been funded by Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS), an Appeal, and several grants.

In 2022, nine nests were found and fenced, and 18 chicks from five nests hatched, and were radio-tagged. Tracking the tagged chicks aims to show how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. 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.



All of the chicks were lost within a few days, three from natural causes, and 15 were predated, 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. Only three out of 18 chicks (17%) survived beyond 8 days, with the longest surviving chick (19 days) still more than two weeks from fledging. The average lifespan of the 18 chicks was only 6.8 days, which is a small fraction of the fledging period.

The SOS Save our Curlews Campaign Report 2022 can be found on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/). This describes the results from 2018 to 2022 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. SOS has called for the number of game birds released each year to be reduced to the number actually shot, within five years.

You can also find more information about the Appeal, including details of how to make donations and where to send them, on the SOS "Save our Curlews" Campaign website, [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

### **3.6 Curlews and Pheasant Release**

Because of the effect of releasing large numbers of Pheasants on the landscape and other wildlife, the RSPB tried to persuade the game bird shooting industry to enter into a voluntary agreement to improve environmental standards, reduce the number of game birds released and ensure better compliance with existing rules about reporting releases. After two years of trying, RSPB has recently concluded that there is no prospect of achieving such an agreement, and will now press for tighter regulation of large-scale game bird releases. For further information see [www.rspb.org.uk/gamebirdreview](http://www.rspb.org.uk/gamebirdreview)

The number of Pheasants and Red-legged Partridges released in the UK EACH YEAR has increased from 4 million in 1961, the first year for which there are figures, to almost 60 million now. Only 35% are shot, and the remainder don't live very long, so they provide a year-round supply of food for every other predator and scavenger. While the number of Pheasants released since 2004 has increased by one-third, the number shot has not increased since the 1990s.

In Shropshire, 726,000 Pheasants were released in 2018 alone, according to official figures, so predation of Curlews (collateral damage from foxes hunting Pheasants) is very high, and the Curlew population is heading for extinction (down 80% since 1990). Conversely, the feral breeding population of Pheasants increased by 62% between 1997 and 2014 (County BBS results), and it is now the tenth most common breeding species in the County (and far and away the biggest in terms of biomass). They have spread from the release sites to virtually every part of the County now.



BTO has published research showing a disproportionate increase in the Buzzard and Crow population in areas with a high number of released Pheasants (Pringle et al 2019).

The massive increase in Pheasant carrion has allowed Buzzard and Raven to spread eastwards across most of England since 1990 and is undoubtedly the food source that has allowed Kites to spread into, and right across, Shropshire in only 15 years.

In 2014 there were an estimated 44,000 pairs of breeding pheasants, all descended from previous releases (Pheasant is an introduced species), compared to 160 pairs of Curlew and 800 pairs of Lapwing.

Again, further information about this can be found on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/).

### **3.7 Use of CWG Survey Results**

In addition to feeding into the monitoring of the County population by SOS, the reporting of Curlew results to the South of England Curlew Forum, the UK and Ireland Curlew Action Group and the Curlew Recovery Partnership, and helping the Curlew Country fieldworkers, the survey results are made available to Natural England.

They show the importance of particular areas for these species, which will hopefully encourage farmers to manage their land more sensitively, and provide Defra with objective evidence to judge individual farm applications to join agri-environment schemes in future, enabling them to target the use of their limited resources more effectively.

The results also reinforce and supplement the results from other Community Wildlife Groups operating in the Shropshire Hills, which together now cover well over 500 square kilometres, around two-thirds of the Shropshire Hills AONB. These results help inform the AONB Management Plan, which has now been revised to cover the five years 2019 – 24.

Coupled with the results of other surveys, the results may also contribute to the identification of potential new Local (County) Wildlife Sites. These sites are monitored by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, which encourages the landowners to manage them so they retain their value for wildlife.

Records of Swift Nest sites have been submitted to Shropshire Council, to take into account when considering Planning Applications.

### **3.8 Acknowledgements**

Most importantly, thanks to the Bird Group members who undertook the survey work:-

Richard Allen, Rod Bacon, Evelyn Boyd, Barbara & Molly Breakwell, Julian Bromhead, Geoff Brown, Emma Bullard, Jane Cummings, Nick Dando, Laura & Kat Edwards-White, Ray Harper, Liz & Rob Hill, Alison & Elizabeth Holmes, Jerry Hughes, Nikola Jaques, Howard Key, Paul & Jenny Kirby, Tony Legg, Julian Livsey, Steve Oates, Bridget Pugh, Janet Radford, Siobhan Reedy, Anne Sheffield, Chris Simpkin, Clive Sinclair, Nikki Smart, Mark Sulway, Luke Walker, Wendy-Jane Walton, Adam Wesson, Paul Wilcox and Anne Yeeles.

Andy Spencer, a qualified BTO bird ringer, organised the Pollardine Farm (Habberley Brook/ The Rea) Nest Box Scheme: he made the boxes, obtained permission from the landowner to put them up, monitored their use, and ringed the Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts. Thanks to Jane and Lizzie Hulton-Harrop for permission to install these boxes, and for help in putting them up.

Thanks to Siobhan Reedy for co-ordinating the other four nest box schemes, and collating the results, to landowners Lorna Farnsworth, Tony Jones, Siobhan Reedy and Stephen Williams for funding the boxes, and monitoring them, and to Andy Spencer for ringing the Pied Flycatcher and Redstart chicks.

Thanks to Geoff Brown for the report on the Pontesford Hill Nest Box Scheme, and to Gill Wilson and Helen Critchley for their valuable assistance there; and to Gareth Richardson for the data in the report on the nest box scheme in Earl's Hill SWT reserve.

Thanks to Steve Oates for organising the Swift project, to the members who contributed the Swift records: Julian Livsey for providing the technical know-how to prepare the map, and to Carol Wood (SOS Swift Species Champion) for supporting this RVCWG programme.

### **3.9 Plans for 2023**

The Bird Group intends to repeat the Bird Survey in 2023. New participants are needed, so we hope to recruit new members. Anyone interested in birds will be very welcome.

A Bird Group meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 22nd March 2023 at Minsterley Village Hall, primarily to plan the bird survey. New members will be very welcome.

An outdoor training meeting will be held in late March or early April for new members who feel that it would be helpful. If you are interested in helping with the Bird Survey, please contact Leo Smith ([leo@leosmith.org.uk](mailto:leo@leosmith.org.uk)).

The nest box schemes will also carry on, and new helpers will be recruited for the Swift project.

Details can also be found and downloaded from the joint website for all the Community Wildlife Groups in the Shropshire Hills, [www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk](http://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk).

#### 4. Resting Hill Nestbox Scheme 2022

Julian Bromhead (RVCWG), Feb 2023.



**Year 8**

## 4.1 Introduction

Resting Hill Wood is located on the slopes of the Stiperstones National Nature Reserve (NNR) above Snailbeach village. It is an actively managed, coppiced sessile oak woodland with coppice rotation by Natural England.

The scheme is aimed at providing nesting opportunities in the form of nesting boxes in the wood for Pied Flycatcher (PF) and Redstart (RT), two species of migratory bird that usually rely on cavities to nest in.



Pied Flycatchers are on the British Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern, whilst Redstarts are on the Amber list. Loss of habitats with suitable mature trees is one of the main causes of decline for these two species.

These boxes also provide homes for other native species such as; Blue Tit (BT), Great Tit (GT) and both are recorded on this site. Since the scheme's inception in 2015, 10 more boxes have been added to the site bringing the total up to 64.

The boxes were erected and are monitored in accordance with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Nest Record Scheme methodology. Data is submitted to the BTO as part of the scheme to contribute towards their long-term population trends.

## 4.2 Results 2022

55% box occupancy rate

32 fledged nests

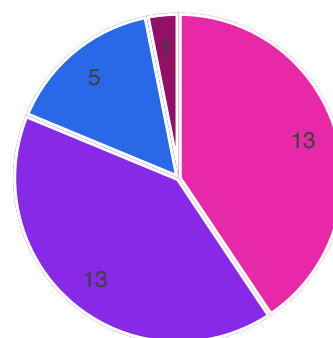
3 failed nests (2 GT and 1 BT)

First egg dates:

Blue Tit 15 April

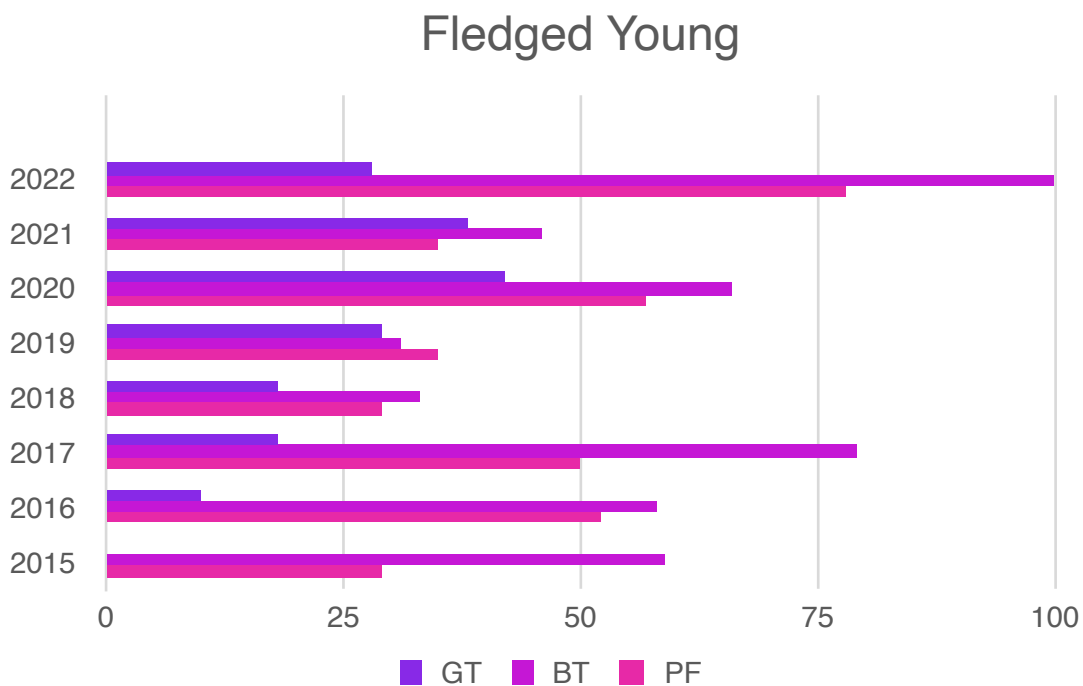
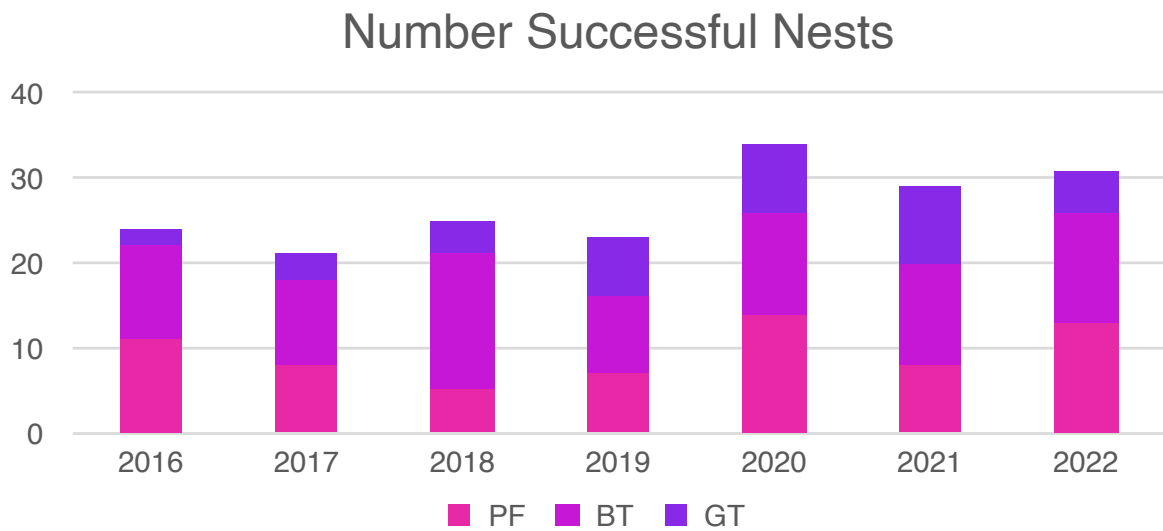
Pied Flycatcher 28 April

Box Species



● Pied Flycatcher ● Blue Tit ● Great Tit ● Robin

### 4.3 Trends at Resting Hill



### 4.4 Ringing at Resting Hill

- 10 PF sitting females lifted for ringing
- 4 of these were 1 year old, the others >2 yrs
- 3 had been ringed previously and all Shropshire birds
- 43 PF young ringed in 2022



## 4.5 Acknowledgements

Thank you to all our volunteers for their continued help:-

- Natural England for allowing access to their Resting Hill site.
- Julian Bromhead for compiling this report
- Dr. Bob Harris (BTO) for carrying out ringing studies
- All the volunteers who worked on this site.

## 5. Community Wildlife Plant Group 2022

By Rob Rowe, Plant Group Leader, January 2023

### 5.1 Introduction

A series of outings and training days started in 2014, with backing from Natural England. The outings are designed to identify and record the plants at each site, and provide informal training for participants to improve their knowledge and identification skills, and then, if they wish, carry out their own survey work.

I am particularly grateful for funding from the Stepping Stone project Green Recovery fund.

### 5.2 Plant Group visits in 2022

A schedule of visits was produced with the help of Cassy Clayton from Natural England. These were distributed electronically and the events were advertised through the Community Wildlife Groups and the Shropshire Hills AONB. There were 9 visits and 1 workshop in 2022 all of which were well attended. These sessions were very popular with a total of ninety five attendees. As well as plants and fungi, birds and insects were recorded, where possible.

- **10 April Ancient Trees of Rorrington:** A walk with 14 people around the Rorrington estate to look at some of the ancient trees, their fungi and their past management and place in the landscape.
- **May 2022:** The group worked on a project to help the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary which requires violet for the caterpillars to feed on. We spent two days carrying out a survey of marsh violet in the wetlands on the east side of the Stiperstones to which 10 people came on each survey. This was based on transects set up with help from Caroline Uff and contributed to a larger survey and report.
- **10 May:** A survey was carried out for marsh violet and other butterfly nectar plants above the Gatten and Hollies farm SSSI and on 25<sup>th</sup> May we continued on SWT land at Brook Vessons and the Hollies. Later in the year, in November, volunteers helped rake up rushes on the SWT land that had been strimmed, to enable the more vulnerable plants to flourish [especially the Marsh violet]

- **12 June White Grit Meadows SSSI:** A visit led by the owners of a family owned farm with a particularly rich flora, which has been managed very sympathetically for many years. This is the only site in the locality where Greater Burnet occurs. It was thriving and spreading into an adjacent field.
- **16 June Lower Aston Farm Meadows near Bishops Castle:** A visit led by the owners who are creating wetland pools and scrapes, doing tree planting and who have some good wetland areas and species rich hay meadows.
- **22 June Meadows at Upper Alport near Churchstoke:** A visit led by the owners who own species rich meadows and a bank which is managed as a hay meadow by horse grazing late in the year
- **8 July - Getting to know grasses:** Led by Dr Richard Gulliver, this was a very popular day learning about grasses, with indoor and outdoor sessions, including what to look out for, how to identify grasses and how they came about.
- **21 July Hope Common:** A visit to look around the plants of the churchyard, then going on to the diverse habitats of Hope Common.
- **16 October - Roundton Hill Fungi:** The purpose of this visit was the identification of fungi on the MWT nature reserve.
- **23 October - Blakemoorgate Fungi:** The purpose of this joint visit with the Shropshire Fungi Group was the identification of fungi in the abandoned settlement.

### 5.3 Invasive plant species

Himalayan Balsam is a non-native invasive plant that is colonising many rivers and streams. The Group secured funding for a seventh year, this time from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Himalayan Balsam was originally found right at the top of the West Onny just into Wales at White Grit, in a tributary near the Bog, and there were large amounts along the Criftin Brook. Pulling it up has been the major part of the project.

We have now worked downstream to the A488 bridge near Horderley, and many areas are now clear. In 2022 work did go ahead much as planned and some volunteers were recruited to help with clearance again. There was a contribution of 6 volunteer days. We were able to work with National Trust volunteers again on the lower reaches of the river and on the Plowden estate we again had the benefit of 2 days access with large numbers of enthusiastic National Trust volunteers [total 20 volunteer days] and on another day with members of the local Plowden fishing club [7 volunteer days].

Landowners have been sympathetic, and the problem is being kept under control with much less of the Balsam occurring now higher in the catchment. A full report can be found on the website.

## 6. Treasurers Report for year end 31st March 2022

By Geoff Brown, Treasurer, February 2023

### REA VALLEY COMMUNITY WILDLIFE GROUP

Year end accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

#### INCOME

HSBC BALANCE @ 09/04/2021	1243.36
Grant for Green Recovery SSP	3000.00
AGM Raffle & Donation	40.00

#### EXPENDITURE

Insurance Premium	137.00
Domain name registration	10.00
AGM Speaker	70.00
AGM Hall Hire	32.00
Bird Group Hall Hire	16.00
Bank Charges	21.20
Bird nest boxes, supply.	150.00

Totals 4283.36

436.20

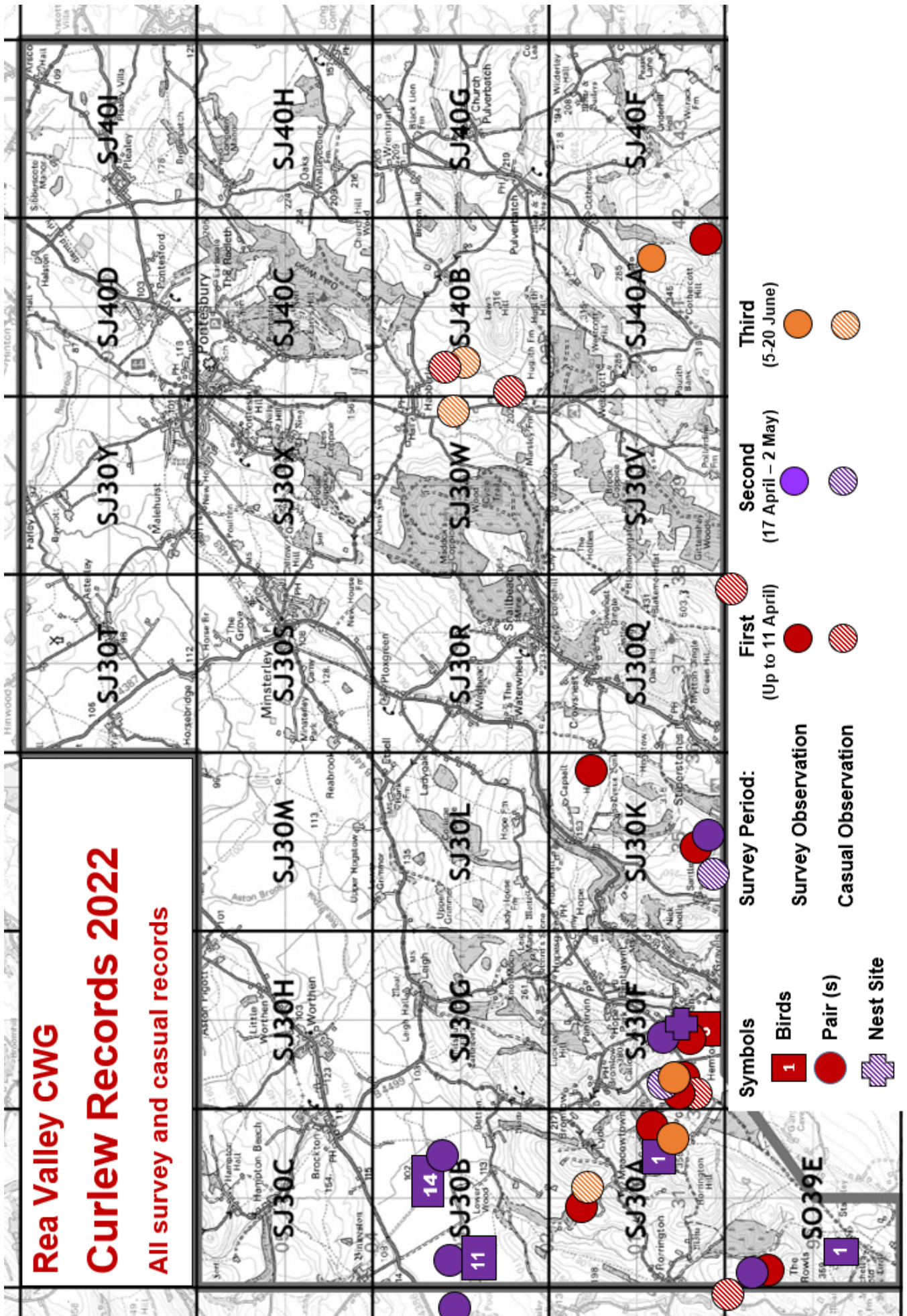
NET BALANCE 3847.16

HSBC statement balance @ 08/04/2022 3847.16



Appendix 1. Map of Survey Area, showing Square Boundaries and Tetrads





### Appendix 3.1: Bird Survey Results 2022

#### First Period (26 March - 10 April)

Tetrad	Surveyor(s)	Time Spent		Number of Each Species Recorded (Individual Birds)															
		Hrs	Mins	Lapwing	Curlew	Kestrel	Red Kite	Grey Partridge	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnoek	Wheatear	Stonechat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow-hammer	Reed Bunting
SJ30 A	Evelyn Boyd	2	15		2	1	3								6		1		
SJ30 B	Mark Sulway			No target species recorded															
SJ30 B	Paul Wilcox & Howard Key	2	0																
SJ30 C	(Square not surveyed)																		
SJ30 F	Wendy-Jane Walton	2	30	1	5		1												2
SJ30 F	Chris Simpkin & Anne Sheffield	4	20		3		1		1										
SJ30 F	(Training Session)			2															
SJ30 G	Jerry Hughes	1	30				2												
SJ30 G	Nikola Jaques	2	20	No target species recorded															
SJ30 H	Jerry Hughes	1	0	No target species recorded															
SJ30 K	Richard Allen	4	30		2														
SJ30 K	Anne Yeeles and Bridget Pugh	3	0		2														
SJ30 K	Clive Sinclair	3	20		4				2	5		3							
SJ30 L	Rod Bacon	1	0	No target species recorded															
SJ30 M	Barbara & Molly Breakwell	3	0		1		1		3										
SJ30 Q	Julian Bromhead	3	15				1	3	4	40									
SJ30 Q	Nick Dando	3	20									1	2	1					
SJ30 R	Richard Allen	inc.		No target species recorded															
SJ30 S	Emma Bullard																		
SJ30 T	Geoff Brown	2	10						1				3						1
SJ30 V	Nikki Smart	0	45				1	1									1		
SJ30 W	Janet Radford	2	45																
SJ30 X	Alison Holmes																		
SJ30 Y	Ray Harper	3	30	No target species recorded															
SJ30 Y	Paul & Jenny Kirby	3	0																
SJ40 A	Steve Oates	2	4				1			1					2				
SJ40 A	Julian Livsey	3	15		2		1		2	1									
SJ40 A	Luke Walker																		
SJ40 B	Siobhan Reedy																		
SJ40 C				Square not surveyed															
SJ40 D	Ray Harper	3	30	No target species recorded															
SJ40 D	Paul & Jenny Kirby	2	40				4												
SJ40 F	Steve Oates	2	5						1										
SJ40 G	Adam Wesson	4	0				2		2										
SJ40 H	Liz & Rob Hill	2	30																
SJ40 I	Jane Cummings	2	10					1											
SJ40 I	Tony Legg	2	0	No target species recorded															
SO39 E	Laura & Kat Edwards-White	4	0		3	3	5	2	38	27		3	24	6		1			1
<b>Totals (26 Tetrads)</b>		<b>77</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

#### Second Period (23 April - 8 May)

Tetrad	Surveyor(s)	Time Spent		Number of Each Species Recorded (Individual Birds)															
		Hrs	Mins	Lapwing	Curlew	Kestrel	Red Kite	Grey Partridge	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnoek	Wheatear	Stonechat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow-hammer	Reed Bunting
SJ30 A	Evelyn Boyd	3	0		1		5						2						
SJ30 B	Mark Sulway	3	3																
SJ30 B	Paul Wilcox & Howard Key	2	0		2														
SJ30 C	(Square not surveyed)																		
SJ30 F	Wendy-Jane Walton	4	10		4		2												
SJ30 F	Chris Simpkin & Anne Sheffield	3	10		1		1												
SJ30 F	(Training Session)																		
SJ30 G	Jerry Hughes	1	30				1		1										
SJ30 G	Nikola Jaques	2	20						1										
SJ30 H	Jerry Hughes	1	0	No target species recorded															
SJ30 K	Richard Allen	?	?		2														
SJ30 K	Anne Yeeles and Bridget Pugh																		
SJ30 K	Clive Sinclair	3	30		1						1								
SJ30 L	Rod Bacon		45	No target species recorded															
SJ30 M	Barbara & Molly Breakwell																		
SJ30 Q	Julian Bromhead	3	30				2		4	44			4	6					
SJ30 Q	Nick Dando	3	45		2		1		3		1		2	2				2	
SJ30 R	Richard Allen	?	?	No target species recorded															
SJ30 S	Emma Bullard																		
SJ30 T	Geoff Brown	2	10						5			3							
SJ30 V	Nikki Smart	0	45						6	6	4			2					
SJ30 W	Janet Radford																		
SJ30 X	Alison & Elizabeth Holmes	2	35	No target species recorded															
SJ30 Y	Ray Harper	2	30	No target species recorded															
SJ30 Y	Paul & Jenny Kirby	3	0				1												
SJ40 A	Steve Oates	2	0						6	5		2					12		
SJ40 A	Julian Livsey																		
SJ40 A	Luke Walker	1	30						1										
SJ40 B	Siobhan Reedy	?	?																
SJ40 C				Square not surveyed															
SJ40 D	Ray Harper	2	30				1						1						
SJ40 D	Paul & Jenny Kirby	2	15				6		1										
SJ40 F	Steve Oates	1	19						3										1
SJ40 G	Adam Wesson	2	45				1		3			2							
SJ40 H	Liz & Rob Hill	2	20				1												
SJ40 I	Jane Cummings																		
SJ40 I	Tony Legg																		
SO39 E	Laura & Kat Edwards-White	3	30		2	3	4		46	59		4	16	9		17			2
<b>Totals (26 Tetrads)</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

## Appendix 3.2: Bird Survey Results 2022

Third Period (4 - 19 June)			Number of Each Species Recorded (Individual Birds)																	
Tetrad	Surveyor(s)	Time Spent		Lapwing	Curlew	Kestrel	Red Kite	Grey Partridge	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Duncock	Wheatear	Stonechat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellowhammer	Reed Bunting	
		Hrs	Mins																	
SJ30 A	Evelyn Boyd	1	15		2		1								5			1		
SJ30 B	Mark Sulway																			
SJ30 B	Paul Wilcox & Howard Key																			
SJ30 C	(Square not surveyed)																			
SJ30 F	Wendy-Jane Walton	1	30		2	3														
SJ30 F	Chris Simpkin & Anne Sheffield																			
SJ30 F	(Training Session)																			
SJ30 G	Jerry Hughes																			
SJ30 G	Nikola Jaques	1	50				1													
SJ30 H	Jerry Hughes																			
SJ30 K	Richard Allen	?	?	No target species recorded																
SJ30 K	Anne Yeeles and Bridget Pugh																			
SJ30 K	Clive Sinclair																			
SJ30 L	Rod Bacon																			
SJ30 M	Barbara & Molly Breakwell	2	45						2											
SJ30 Q	Julian Bromhead	3	0				1		7	55+	1				4					
SJ30 Q	Nick Dando	7	0			1			lots	lots	1			1						
SJ30 R	Richard Allen																			
SJ30 S	Emma Bullard	2	0						1											
SJ30 T	Geoff Brown	1	50						1			1							1	
SJ30 V	Nikki Smart	0	45				1				4	2								
SJ30 W	Janet Radford																			
SJ30 X	Alison & Elizabeth Holmes																			
SJ30 Y	Ray Harper																			
SJ30 Y	Paul & Jenny Kirby	3	30	No target species recorded																
SJ40 A	Steve Oates	1	54				1		9	2						1			1	
SJ40 A	Julian Livsey																			
SJ40 A	Luke Walker & Janet Radford	2	45		1				2		1									1
SJ40 B	Siobhan Reedy																			
SJ40 C				Square not surveyed																
SJ40 D	Ray Harper																			
SJ40 D	Paul & Jenny Kirby	2	35				1													
SJ40 F	Steve Oates	1	10				1		4	2										
SJ40 G	Adam Wesson	3	45	No target species recorded																
SJ40 H	Liz & Rob Hill																			
SJ40 I	Jane Cummings																			
SJ40 I	Tony Legg	2	0	No target species recorded																
SO39 E	Laura & Kat Edwards-White																			
<b>Totals (26 Tetrads)</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	