

BTO surveys in Worcestershire 2018



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BTO breeding bird survey (BBS)

As ever this annual staple of the survey season will start again on 1st April. The survey was handed over by Harry Green in good order and is well supported by the volunteer community. However, there have been a number of retirements from 1km squares over the past 18 months. Therefore, I would ask that anybody you may know with good bird ID skills should be encouraged to take a look at the possibility of covering a square. I should very much like to hear from them. In particular, SO66 and SP06 have a couple of squares which have received no coverage for a number of years.

BTO waterways breeding bird survey (WBBS)

WBBS is probably the most popular of the annual BTO surveys. All stretches of watercourses enjoy continuous coverage in Worcestershire as they also do in my other patches in Birmingham & West Midlands. Nothing more pleasant than walking a steady transect along a canal or river it would seem! I would strongly agree as I look forward to covering Dowles Brook along the "Harrison Trail".

BTO Heronries Census 2018

As many people will know 2018 is the 90th anniversary of this survey, which was first carried out in 1928 as a one-off survey! Therefore, BTO are looking for maximum coverage of all known sites and also any new colonies that may have been established more recently.

The heronries in Worcestershire are usually monitored by our own Mervyn Needham. If anyone is aware of any new colonies within the county please let us know.

We would also appeal for volunteers to cover heronries in the other patch for which I am Regional Organiser, Birmingham & West Midlands, which lost its main volunteer fieldworker recently.

BTO project owl

I really could not count the number of people that have asked me when the BTO were planning to do some more work on owls. Well, here is your chance!

The last BTO national survey for this group of species was the Tawny Owl Call Survey in 2006. 2018 will be the first year of a study of our owl species. More information will become available later on in the year that will give volunteers the opportunity to enter data that they can gather on 'their' owls nesting in their gardens, farmland, parks, etc. This survey is sure to be well supported if early comments are anything to go by.

Other bird survey projects

Wyre Forest woodland bird survey

This ambitious project, in its third year in 2018, was set up as a combined project between Natural England, Forestry Commission and local BTO in order to measure the effects of woodland management on bird species over a number of years. This is obviously a long-term endeavour provided that funding continues to be forthcoming.

Alice James at NE offices, Lodge Farm is leading on the survey which involves engaging with a small army of volunteer fieldworkers to cover point counts, BBS style transects and single species surveys on Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

I am pleased to report that the survey has been a resounding success as far as volunteer recruitment is concerned with all point counts and

BBS enjoying coverage in 2016 and 2017. However, we could do with more records of Lesser Spots, especially as Wyre has to be one of the UK's strongholds for this elusive species.

I hope that the Wyre Forest Woodland Bird Survey continues to hold on to its volunteer base in order to achieve it's aims. As an aside, one of the survey's BBS squares that I covered held 12 singing male Tree Pipits! Other observers (Matt Willmott) also remarked on their surprise at how many of this species they had recorded on point counts.