



BTO SURVEY UPDATE

Steve Davies.
Regional Representative for BTO in Birmingham, West Midlands & Worcestershire.
Tel: 07882 891726.
E-mail: stevedaviesbtorep@hotmail.co.uk

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to BTO surveys in Worcestershire and beyond in 2018. Your participation is extremely valuable in monitoring the UK avifauna.

I have put together this short report to give feedback on what has been happening in 2018 and looking forward to new BTO projects that are coming online as I write.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY (BBS)

I am afraid to report that due to numerous retirements and volunteers being unable to cover their squares there has been a low return for Worcestershire in 2018. I would like to encourage greater uptake of BBS within the recording community. This important survey requires two visits to a 1km square during the breeding season and good bird identification skills are essential.

If you or anyone you know would like to consider one of the following 1km squares I would be delighted to hear from them!

SO6160---NEAR THORNBURY.
SO7472---BLISS GATE.
SO7674---ROCK COPPICE.
SO7778---TRIMPLEY.
SO7864---NEAR LITTLE WITLEY.
SO7877---NORTH WOOD.
SO8439---TUNNEL HILL.
SO8462---SINTON.
SO8469---WARESLEY.
SO8470---HARTLEBURY.
SO8730---PARK FARM, NEAR TEWKESBURY.
SO8853---WHITTINGTON.
SO8865---HAMPTON LOVETT.
SO9057---TIBBERTON.
SO9278---HOLY CROSS.
SO9630---WOOLSTONE.
SO9733---TEDDINGTON.
SO9840---ELMLEY CASTLE.
SO9971---VOGO.
SP0368---ENFIELD, REDDITCH.
SP0461---ASTWOOD BANK.

BTO WATERWAYS BREEDING BIRD SURVEY (WBBS)

In contrast, WBBS continues to be very popular with all but one stretch covered in 2018. I would hope for 100% coverage in 2019.

BTO TAWNY OWL POINT SURVEY (TOPS)

BTO have raised funding for a five year study of our owl species for which there are huge gaps in our knowledge. TOPS is the first element of this project and was launched on 15th August and will run on to 15th October. Subject to funding a second phase of surveys will be from 15th February till 15th March 2019. It is expected to be repeated again next year 2019/20.

The survey involves selecting a tetrad from a 10km square and making two, preferably three visits within two hours of dusk to record hooting and calling Tawny Owls, the object being to estimate the number of Tawny Owl territories present within the tetrad. It is a follow up to the Tawny Owl Calling survey in 2005/6 and is ideal for birders of all abilities.

At the time of writing all priority squares within the allocation for Worcestershire (SO95) enjoy 100% uptake. However, there are a small number of non-priority tetrads still available if you would still

like to get involved locally.

If you wish to travel further afield, there are many tetrads throughout the UK requiring a fieldworker. Please take a look at the BTO webpages for TOPS.

BTO TAWNY OWL CALLING SURVEY (TOCS)

The second element of the owl project is now open for registration and goes live on 30th September this year. This really is a survey for everybody! This survey is being run from BTO HQ. You are able to register a site of your choice on the survey webpage. It is very flexible and could be your own garden, local park or favourite patch of woodland.

Volunteers are being asked to listen for Tawny Owls hooting or calling from sunset to midnight on a weekly basis if possible from 30th September to the end of March 2019. If you can make at least six counts that would be fine. If you can manage more, even better.

Please do not be put off if you think your sessions would not reveal any owls. Zero counts are just as important as finding our target species. We need to know where Tawny Owls are missing as well! So please 'give a hoot for Tawny Owls' and sign up!

BTO WINTER BBS STYLE TRANSECT 2018/19

In my latest update from Dawn Balmer and Sarah Harris at BTO HQ, the Regional Representatives have been given notification that BTO has secured funding to carry out a one-off winter BBS style transect survey to randomly selected 1km squares. These will be the same suite of 1km squares that we cover in the breeding season every year I do not know at this stage the final selection from the regional lists of squares. I am informed that the squares to be covered will contain farmland. Exactly what percentage of each square must be of this habitat type is still to be relayed to us. The idea behind all of this is to take a standardised stocktake of birds on farmland BBS squares to add to contract work that the BTO are conducting with Natural England and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. It is all part of a study of bird populations on farmland in agri-environment schemes in comparison with a sample of farmland which is not in the agri-environment system.

What I can say with confidence is that the survey is expected to launch on 1st November next.

Anyone who is keen to wrap up well and don their wellies over the winter period would enjoy this survey. Please let me know to register your interest.

OTHER NON-BTO SURVEYS

FWAG---FARMING FOR BIRDS IN THE CARRANT

Joanne Leigh from FWAG and Gordon Kirk (BTO RR for Gloucestershire) have been asking me for some time to help get volunteers to visit farms in the Carrant area which borders southernmost Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The idea is to give farmers feedback on the numbers of birds inhabiting their farmland during both winter and the breeding season. They then have the benefit of seeing the benefits that their farming for the environment confers on declining farmland birds.

It gives the volunteer the opportunity to survey for birds on farmland which would normally be out of bounds to the birdwatching fraternity. Additionally, this is Corn Bunting habitat a species which has suffered a catastrophic 86% decline in the past 20 years.

If you are interested in getting involved in this exciting project please contact Joanne Leigh on 07811681766 or e-mail joanne.leigh@fwagsw.org.uk.