

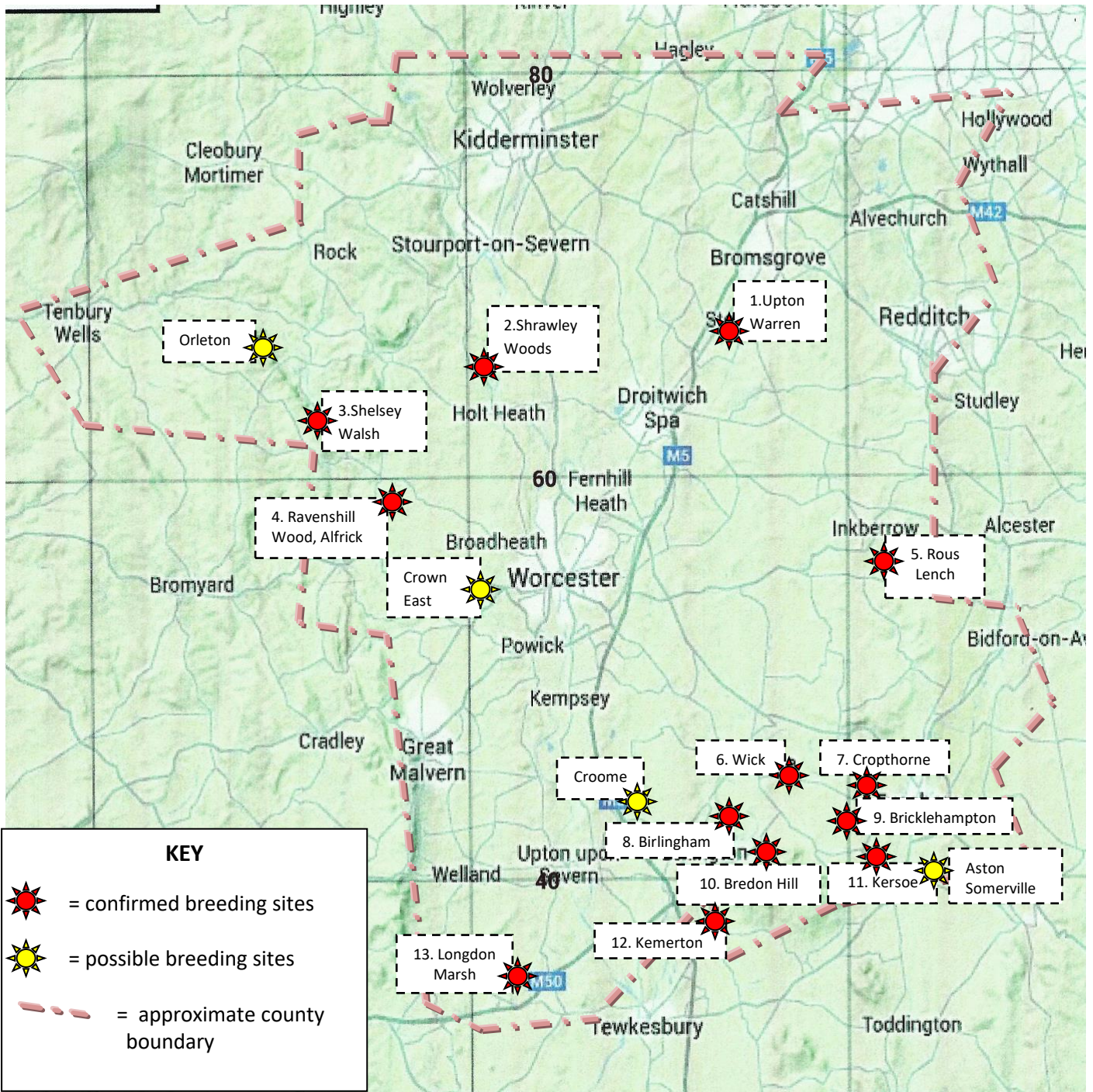
Ravens *Corvus corax* breeding in Worcestershire 2018 update

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In 2017 I reported 15 confirmed breeding sites with a further four possible sites. This year's survey has uncovered very mixed fortunes amongst the established breeding pairs, and the extreme March weather is likely to have been a factor. 13 confirmed and four possible sites were found in 2018 and once again I am indebted to Worcestershire's highly observant birders who provided me with

information and new nest locations to survey. I also visited other sites identified in the West Midlands Bird Club annual report for 2015.

The map replicates the format of the 2017 map and locates confirmed breeding sites (where adults and the nest, or with young were observed) and possible breeding sites (where adults were displaying territorial behaviours by a suspected nest site). Once again, information on breeding success or failure is incomplete, so "confirmed" can only refer to observed breeding attempts rather than successful fledging. However, such observations that do exist have been added to tables 1 and 2 below.



Confirmed and possible breeding raven sites in Worcestershire – 2018

Table 1 Confirmed Raven breeding sites.

1.	Upton Warren	Adult seen in mid-March apparently sitting and maintaining nest on pylon used in previous three years, but no young were seen to be raised.
2.	Shrawley Woods	Two/three young being fed around nest in early May. Nest used in previous years.
3.	Shelsey Walsh	Two nearly-fledged young seen in nest and possible third in same tree with adults defending aggressively (mid-May). Site used in previous years.
4.	Alfrick	Two adults defending area of Ravenshill Wood in late May, and nest seen previously. Also reported that nest used and young reared in 2017.
5.	Rous Lench	Two adults and three young seen in flat top cedar in mid-May. Nest site in previous years.
6.	Wick	Two nests intact. Reported that three young had fledged by late April/early May.
7.	Crophorne	Nest seen behind Holland House. Reported that adults had been present at nest during April. Site used in previous years.
8.	Birlingham	Adult defending visible nest in tall cedar in late April.
9.	Bricklehampton	Adults and young seen in previous year's nest tree near newest nest in mid-June.
10.	Bredon Hill, Woollas Hall	Two adults and minimum three young in sheep fields and oaks after leaving hall grounds in late May.
11.	Kersoe	Two adults with two/three fledged juveniles (flying) defending area of woodland in mid-May.
12.	Kemerton	Pair raised young in top of flat-top cedar.
13.	Longdon Marsh	Adult male with two recently fledged young seen in June. Two adults had been present in February and March.

Table 2. Possible raven breeding sites

Orleton	Two adults seen displaying while returning to wood in June, and joined by two others. Reported nest site in previous years.
Crown East, Worcester	Two adults noisily defending nest area in late April, but nest not seen. Site used in previous years.
Croome	No nesting activity directly observed this year. Nest intact and one possible juvenile seen in nest tree remaining very quiet in late May.
Aston Somerville	Nest possibly seen and two adults defended from third bird in April. No further nesting evidence afterwards.



01. Raven. Mike Metcalf

There is a marked south-easterly bias in the results, but this probably reflects the failure to find more breeding pairs in the north and west of the county, and particularly the Wyre Forest. I would welcome any help in terms of information, even if only speculative, because I am happy to follow up with my own observations.

Large conifer trees, particularly cedar spp. *Cedrus* are favoured for nesting, but there is a pylon nest at Upton Warren, and there was another near Stourport-on-Severn in the past

Negative news came from five confirmed nest sites in 2017: Salwarpe, one of the longest-established Worcestershire nests, where the adults were seen locally in poor condition. No nesting was attempted this year.

Pershore Hall, where the nest tree had been cut in half. Southern Malvern Hills, where the nest was abandoned, although an adult was heard nearby.

Dodford, where no adults were seen.

Abbey Manor, Evesham, where no nest could be found this year.

No observations were possible this year for the Lickey Hills and Broadway.

My thanks go to Digby Bartlett, Graham Martin, Rob Prudden, Chris Thomson, Mark and Christine Turner and Dave Walker for helping me to compile this year's report.

Reference

West Midland Bird Club (Ed. Emley, D.W.) 2018. *The Birds of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands 2015. Annual Report 82.* West Midland Bird Club.

Image

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