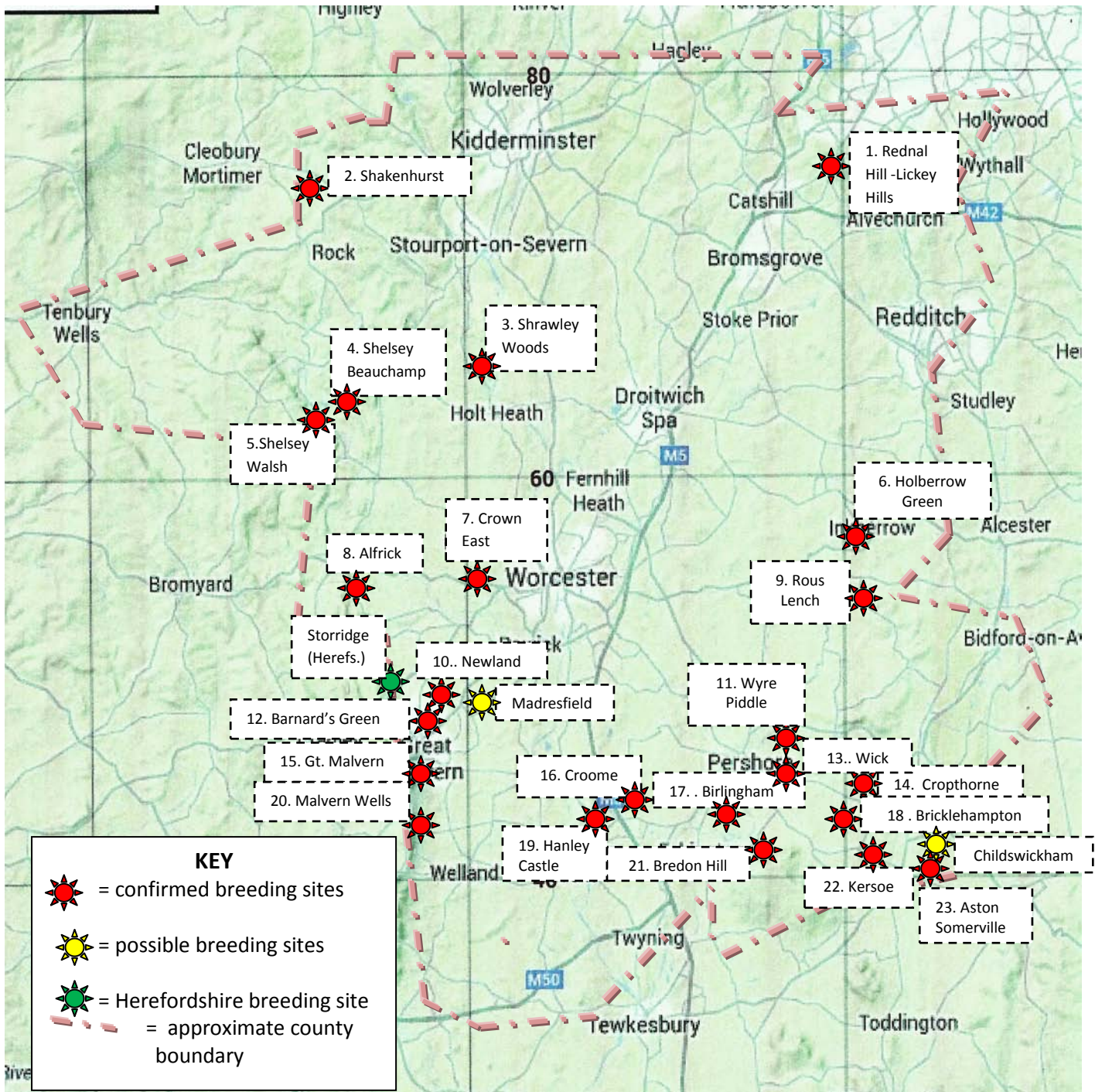


Ravens *Corvus corax* breeding in Worcestershire – 2020 update

Mike Metcalf.
mikebirder@hotmail.com

This year’s survey started in March but the most active part of the breeding season was missed through the Coronavirus lockdown. All was not lost, however, because from mid-May I could resume visits while most breeding pairs and their newly fledged young remained close to the nest sites. Added to this, a number of *Worcestershire Record* readers sent me reports from their home areas, and the result

is a reasonably complete and reliable count of our breeding population. All those who helped are acknowledged below. The results follow the same format as previous years (map 01 and Tables 01 & 02). “Confirmed” breeding sites are where adults and the nest, or with young were observed, and “possible” breeding sites are where adults were displaying territorial behaviours by a suspected nest site or where a family was observed but the nest site not located. A “confirmed” record does not imply successful breeding, as information on success or failure is incomplete, particularly this year when surveying suffered a long hiatus. It could even be defined as “assumed breeding” under these exceptional circumstances. However, any observations that do exist have been added to tables.



Map 01. Confirmed and possible breeding Raven sites in Worcestershire – 2020

2020

1.	Rednal Hill, Lickey Hills	Displaying adult seen in March. Two adults and two young seen by nest in tall conifer in May.
2.	Shakenhurst	Pair raised at least one offspring in Douglas Fir nest in May.
3.	Shrawley Woods	Traditional nest seen in tall conifer and defended actively by both adults. Young not seen but possibly heard nearby in mid-May.
4.	Shelsey Beauchamp	Large nest seen with two juveniles calling nearby in May. Nest in tall conifer was clean, indicating a possible second nest within the site.
5.	Shelsey Walsh	Two adults and two young seen in field next to conifer nest in mid-May. Nest surrounded by droppings.
6.	Holberrow Green	Two adults and two young seen feeding in cattle field next to confirmed nest site in private grounds in May.
7.	Crown East, Worcester	Two young led back from crop field into private grounds by adults in June. Last year's nest intact but clean. Possibly used a second nest in same location?
8.	Alfrick	Adults defended nest site through Winter and early Spring. Number fledged unknown.
9.	Rous Lench	Two adults actively defending previous nest site where two juveniles perched on top of large cedar in May (private grounds).
10.	Newland	Scots Pine nest intact in North Wood and defended by adult against a Buzzard in March. Nest used and birds in proximity in May.
11.	Wyre Piddle	Pair raised three young at previous site and defended site throughout June. Possible nest located in conifer within private grounds.
12.	Barnards Green,	Nest seen in conifer in private grounds. Pair seen to raise two young this year.
13.	Wick	Both nests seen in previous site with sitting bird on one in mid-March.
14.	Croptorne	Nest seen in Smokey Lane, with sitting bird and mate aggressively defending in mid-March.
15.	Great Malvern Earnslaw Quarry	Pair raised three/four chicks in tall conifer, observed in early April.
16.	Croome	Nest seen in traditional tree, actively defended by both adults in March. One displayed by sky-dancing.
17.	Birlingham	Nest and sitting adult seen in March. Two young raised and seen in the nest in April.
18.	Bricklehampton	Last year's nest again seen with sitting adult in March.
19.	Hanley Castle	New nest seen in different tall conifer with sitting female in March. Two adults and one juvenile seen on nest tree in June.
20.	Malvern Wells	Adult defended nest site aggressively against Buzzard, and newly fledged juvenile seen there in early April.
21.	Bredon Hill	Large nest seen in Scots Pine at last year's suspected site in March, with both adults actively defending.
22.	Kersoe	Last year's nest seen in conifer with two adults defending in March.
23.	Aston Somerville	Two adults and one juvenile seen at last year's suspected nest site in mature deciduous trees on private land in May.
	Storrige (Herefordshire)	Nest in conifer used again. Two adults and four juveniles seen in adjacent field in May.

Table 01. Confirmed Raven breeding sites - 2020

POSSIBLE

Childswickham area	Pair and five juveniles observed in late June. This is an exceptionally large family when compared with others in Worcestershire. Nesting location yet to be determined.
Madresfield	Two adults and three young seen around Madresfield Court in mid-June. Uncertainty whether they were visiting from nearby nesting site or an authentic Madresfield family.

Table 02. Possible Raven breeding sites - 2020



Raven at Croome March 2020. Dave Hull.

As the network of observers and observations has grown additional pairs can be added retrospectively.

In 2019 there were 14 confirmed breeding pairs and 6 possibles. We now know that confirmed breeding occurred at:

Barnard's Green
Southern Malvern Hills
Malvern Wells and
Shakenhurst,

In addition two possible sites can now be classed as confirmed:

Wyre Piddle and
Aston Somerville.

This brings the 2019 revised totals to:

20 confirmed

4 possible

Applying new information to the previous report in 2018, the estimated revised totals are:

19 confirmed

3 possibles

This is reassuring as the population appears to have continued its gradual expansion in 2020, despite the scepticism mentioned in last year's report.

As before, I would warmly welcome information of any sightings or observations from *Worcestershire Record* readers to add to the reliability of these annual surveys. Although two new sites have been located on the east of the county this year, the map (01) shows that there are large areas here that may hold undiscovered nest sites. The same applies to the Tenbury Wells area, and the extreme south-west around the Longdon/Bushley Green area.

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