

Ravens *Corvus corax* breeding in Worcestershire – 2021 update

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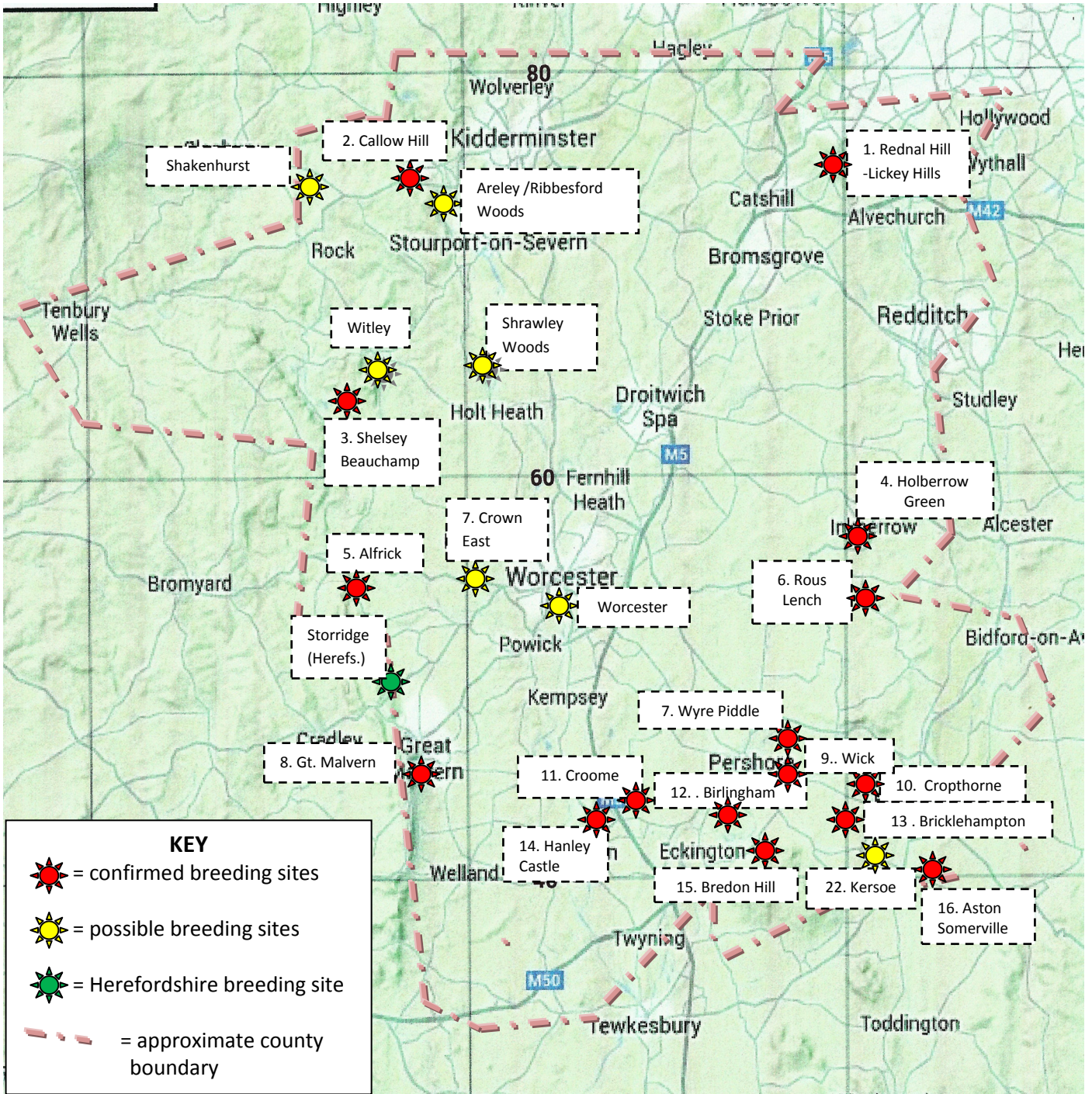
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Young Ravens in the nest. photographed by licenced bird ringer on visit to ring the birds. Paul Ashworth.

As we all know, there was another lockdown at the start of 2021, but it was possible to visit some former nest sites from late February onwards. Once again, Record readers sent me their own observations and a map of the distribution of breeding pairs of Ravens could be constructed. All those who helped are acknowledged below.

The results follow the same format as previous years (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 remains incomplete.



01. Confirmed and possible Raven breeding sites in Worcestershire – 2021

CONFIRMED

1.	Rednal Hill, Lickey Hills	Pair seen at last year's nest site in mid-April with male defending. Nest not seen. Eight Ravens seen nearby in late June.
2.	Callow Hill	Pair seen nesting.
3.	Shelsey Beauchamp	Nest seen and both adults in vicinity in late March along with Red Kites (who nested nearby). Highly communicative group of 4 joined by two adults in same location late May.
4.	Holberrow Green	Nest seen and adults with at least one juvenile in June. This site has had another nest with Ravens present for about 11 years.
5.	Alfrick	Probable breeding reported this year and nest intact in June.
6.	Rous Lench	Adult pair defended nest area in late March and seen flying with two young in late May.
7.	Wyre Piddle	Pair defending nest area in early March and again in mid-May when two juvenile calls were heard.
8.	Great Malvern Earnslaw Quarry	Nest defended by two adults in mid-March. Two juveniles heard with an adult flying off from nest site in early June.
9.	Wick	Nest intact and pair seen mating in adjacent field. Female sitting in mid-April and both adults in nest tree in May when possible juvenile calls heard.
10.	Croptorne	Courtship calls and territorial defence calls in late February. Still defending nest site in mid-May and one probable juvenile flew off.
11.	Croome	Adults and four young flying to and from nest site in mid-May.
12.	Birlingham	Sitting female seen in late March. Juvenile seen in mid-May.
13.	Bricklehampton	Both adults seen at nest in early March. Nest seen again in late May with white droppings and adults reported to remain at site.
14.	Hanley Castle	Nest intact with adults defending in late February. Adults and two juveniles at nest site in late May.
15.	Bredon Hill	Nest intact with both adults defending in early March. Juveniles heard with adults in nearby trees in late May.
16.	Aston Somerville	One adult at nest site in early April. Two adults at site in early June but both present in between indicating breeding activity. Access to nest site not permitted to confirm outcome.
	Storrige (Herefordshire)	Female sitting in early March with male defending. Two juveniles seen with adults defending in late May.

Table 01. Confirmed Raven breeding sites - 2021

POSSIBLE

1.	Shakenhurst	Courtship flights by pair seen in late April but no other evidence of breeding or location.
2.	Areley/Ribbesford Woods	Adults regularly seen approaching Areley Wood. Pair seen carrying nesting material there in late March.
3.	Shrawley Woods	Courtship flights at nest site in early March, but outcome not known. This is a long-established nest site.
4.	Witley Court	Adults reported to be present throughout breeding season.
5.	Crown East, Worcester	Probable pair seen on territory in late February, but no sign of birds in May visits.
6.	Worcester	Two juveniles with adults in Wellingtonia in late May but nest site not found yet. Possibly Crown East pair.
7.	Kersoe	Adults patrolling nest site in mid-April. Access to wood now denied. No further information.

Table 02. Possible Raven breeding sites - 2021

There were fewer confirmed breeding sites than in 2020 but more possible sites including new ones to monitor. The combined totals are virtually unchanged over the past 4 years:

- 2021 – 23
- 2020 – 25
- 2019 – 24
- 2018 – 22

Although this may indicate stability within the breeding population the missing factor is the “known unknowns” – i.e. undetected breeding pairs in the east of the county, the Wyre Forest, Longdon and the Tenbury Wells areas. I would really welcome any observations from Record readers in those areas that I can follow up.

Acknowledgements

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References

Metcalf, M. Ravens *Corvus corax* breeding in Worcestershire. *Worcestershire Record* 45:6-7 (2018); 47:55-57 (2019) and 48:108-110 (2020-2021).