

Brent Bird Survey NOVEMBER 2016 SUMMARY

Twenty-six observers, **187** square visits and **73** bird species (*cf.* 25, 202 and 82 in October). As autumn migration petered out, there was a drop in the number of species, but the total was slightly higher than the 69 and 70 of November 2014 and 2015, and included **Short-eared Owl**, new for the year. Butterflies showed a steep seasonal decline, with just two species recorded, though in more squares than last November, and an otherwise poor month for mammals was saved by another **Otter** sighting. Further details are as follows:

1. **GAINS.** No new species, but a **Short-eared Owl** hunting below Three Barrows on the 20th was the first for the year, the first for November and only the second for the survey. Also not recorded in previous Novembers were **Merlin**, **Swallow** and **Wigeon**, with **Great Black-backed Gull**, **Pintail** and **Wigeon** additions from the previous month. Although **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** were recorded in October during the departure of summer visitors, those in November, on the 19th and 16th respectively, were almost certainly winter visitors, so, in that sense, additions.
2. **LOSSES.** In contrast to the previous month, as expected, there were no records of the last of the summer visitors (**Hobby**, **House Martin**, **Redstart** and **Wheatear**), but several other species were not recorded either: **Black-headed Gull**, **Brambling**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Linnets**, **Little Egret**, **Willow Tit** and **Yellow-browed Warbler**. Appearing in November 2014 and 2015, but not this year, were **Black Redstart** and **Little Egret**.
3. **UPS.** Compared to the previous month and previous Novembers, it was a good month for **Golden Plover** (5 squares) and **Peregrine** (9, but could be just one wide-ranging individual). Compared to October it was also a good month for **Starling** and **Woodcock**, and **Bullfinch**, **Cormorant**, **Goldfinch**, **Grey Heron** and **Reed Bunting** were all recorded in more squares than in previous Novembers.
4. **DOWNS.** Compared to the previous month and previous Novembers, **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and **Meadow Pipit** were recorded in fewer squares; for both species it was 14 this year and 23 in 2015. Compared to October, it was also a poor month for **Skylark**, **Stonechat** and **Yellowhammer**, and **Marsh Tit** continued to be recorded from just one square, compared to six in both November 2014 and 2015.
5. **FLOCKING & SINGING.** Largest gatherings: 1,000 **Fieldfares**, 900 **Woodpigeons** (migrating), 500 'mixed corvids' & **Starlings**; and 220 **Pied Wagtails** (at roost). Other maximum counts were: 100 for **Herring Gull**, **Jackdaw** & **Woodpigeon**; 70 for **Redwing**; 57 for **Wigeon**; 50 for **Rook**; 45 for **Golden Plover**; 37 for **House Sparrow**; 36 for **Carrion Crow**; 30 for **Teal** & **Chaffinch**; 29 for **Goosander**; 28 for **Skylark**; and 25 for **Mallard**. Both **Mistle** and **Song Thrushes** started singing in November, being first heard on the 15th and 12th respectively.
6. **MIGRANTS.** Some species are probably still on the move, and there might be more movement if the weather gets colder, but compared to the last four months, migration has effectively ground to a halt. All summer visitors, apart from a single **Swallow** over Brent Hill on the 8th, had left by the end of October, and winter visitors are now well established, although with only one **Brambling** in October, it would be nice if more arrived – or revealed themselves if here already.
7. **NON-BIRDS.** Two **Otters** seen and photographed at Avonwick, were rather more welcome than the bold **Fox** which has been working its way, seemingly unchallenged, through the village chickens. Although **Mole** hills are much in evidence again, it was otherwise a poor month for mammals, and even worse for reptiles (none recorded). All three amphibians made an appearance, but only two species of butterfly were seen compared to nine in October. Apart from a single **Peacock**, all were **Red Admirals**, recorded in 11 squares, compared to only four in November 2015.

CONTRIBUTORS. Thanks to the following for their records: Margaret & Philip Andrade, Dave & Jan Ayres, Eileen Blockly, John & Sylvia Caddick, Phil & Sue Dean, Andrew & Kit Ferguson, Mike & Jan Goss, Laurette Guest, Peter & Sylvia Hamilton, Paul & Barbara Heatley, Gill Honey, Steve Hopper, Mike Ingram, John Luscombe, Dave MacDiarmid, Jonathan Nicholson, Dave & Kate Pakes, Mike Passman, Jane Pickard, Adrian & Gaynor Platt, Peter Reay & Lesley Austin, Tony Rose, Andy Smith, Val Stanley, Barrie Whitehall, Julia & Robin Willoughby and Dave & Margaret Worrall.