



# Brent Bird Survey



## May 2018 summary

The second May of the extended survey resulted in continued good coverage. All 52 squares were visited by at least one observer and 23 observers contributed, but the totals of 2,077 records and 140 square visits were lower than those of the survey years. Overall, the weather presented few problems, being mostly dry and often warm, but the cold spells in late winter may have had an adverse effect on some species. The results are summarized as follows, and in the table below. After the record 87 species in May 2017, this year's total of 80 was closer to the 2014-16 mean of 81. No new species were added, but **Pied Flycatchers** in a nest-box on the East Glaze in Square 5 was a new breeding species for the survey, the last being near Moorgate in 2012. Also, **Stonechats** on farmland near Charford in Square 41 provided the first breeding record for the survey away from the moor (North Zone) for this species which is a scarce breeder anywhere in Devon away from the moor, heaths and coast. Other lowland records of species more typical of moorland and heath included a **Grasshopper Warbler** singing at Didworthy (Square 40) in early May, a **Cuckoo** at Avonwick (Square 36) and a **Tree Pipit** singing in late May near Stippadon, just inside Square 40.

There were few surprises among other species. Most of those expected to occur did so, and they occurred in a similar number of squares to 2014-16. Five regular species had their best year in terms of number of squares, but only marginally in most cases: **Blackbird**, **Cuckoo**, **Little Grebe**, **Long-tailed Tit** and **Pheasant**. To these positives can be added **Goldfinch** and **Reed Bunting** (equal highest with 2017) and **Willow Warbler** (higher than survey years but fewer squares than in 2017). Also, several species which were flagged as occurring in fewer squares in 2017 had improved: **Dipper**, **Mistle Thrush**, **Nuthatch**, **Sparrowhawk**, **Treecreeper** and **Wheatear**.

However, many more species were either not recorded, or occurred in fewer squares. Those not recorded, but which had been recorded in all or most previous Mays were **Kingfisher**, **Little Owl**, **Red-legged Partridge**, and **Sand Martin**, though all have been quite scarce species in the area, and little significance can be attached to their absences in one year. Among the regular species, 16 were recorded in the lowest number of squares in May since 2014: **Blue Tit**, **Chiffchaff**, **Dunnock**, **Goldcrest**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Greenfinch** (see chart), **Green Woodpecker**, **House Martin**, **House Sparrow**, **Kestrel**, **Magpie**, **Mallard**, **Marsh Tit**, **Raven**, **Swallow** and **Swift** (see chart). And **Buzzard**, **Coal Tit**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Jay** and **Peregrine** flagged in 2017, continued to be recorded in fewer squares than in 2014-16. At least some of these changes could reasonably be ascribed to differences in coverage, arrival times of migrants and effects of the cold spell, but the lower occurrence of **Marsh Tit** and **Greenfinch** reflect more widespread declines in these species, the latter likely to be linked to the disease trichomoniasis.

The results have certainly provided yet more fascinating insights into the birds of the parish, and this will continue as we accumulate more data over the years. It would be unwise to read too much into the changes observed so far, but it will be interesting to see how the species flagged as doing well and poorly in 2018 fare in the future. Hopefully the level of recording will be maintained, *and ideally increased*, to provide the best information possible. Since the May survey, there has been an unexpected record of a **Nightjar** heard and briefly seen above Shipley in Square 23 on 22 June. The last published record of this species in the area was near Moorgate in 1963, but it now appears that churring was heard in the Shipley area in the early 2000s.

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## BBS Number of squares per species per month per year

2014-2016 mean for May (minimum value = 1)

**absences** and **small notable\* decreases** relative to 2014-16

**absences** and **large notable\* decreases** relative to 2014-16

**additions** and **notable\* increases** relative to 2014-16



### MAY

Year	2014	2015	2016	Mean	2017	2018
Number of observers	39	27	25	<b>30</b>	18	23
Number of square visits	196	184	206	<b>195</b>	165	140
Number of records	2,608	2,578	3,072	<b>2,753</b>	2,319	2,077
<b>Canada Goose</b>	12	7	14	<b>11</b>	8	<b>13</b>
<b>Mallard</b>	17	18	16	<b>17</b>	17	<b>9</b>
<b>Goosander</b>	1	-	1	<b>1</b>	-	<b>1</b>
<b>Pheasant</b>	22	27	31	<b>27</b>	26	<b>33</b>
<b>Grey Heron</b>	8	5	9	<b>7</b>	8	<b>8</b>
<b>Little Grebe</b>	1	1	2	<b>1</b>	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	13	8	12	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Buzzard</b>	33	36	40	<b>36</b>	31	<b>32</b>
<b>Kestrel</b>	4	9	10	<b>8</b>	9	<b>2</b>
<b>Peregrine</b>	2	3	2	<b>2</b>	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Moorhen</b>	4	3	7	<b>5</b>	4	<b>4</b>
<b>Snipe</b>	1	5	5	<b>4</b>	2	<b>1</b>
<b>Herring Gull FLYING</b>	28	29	30	<b>29</b>	28	<b>22</b>
<b>Herring Gull LANDED</b>	ND	18	21	<b>20</b>	13	<b>18</b>
<b>Stock Dove</b>	16	12	19	<b>16</b>	15	<b>16</b>
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	35	38	39	<b>37</b>	37	<b>39</b>
<b>Collared Dove</b>	18	12	22	<b>17</b>	17	<b>20</b>
<b>Cuckoo</b>	14	17	17	<b>16</b>	12	<b>18</b>
<b>Tawny Owl</b>	5	4	9	<b>6</b>	6	<b>9</b>
<b>Swift</b>	13	12	16	<b>14</b>	18	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Woodpecker</b>	13	12	13	<b>13</b>	13	<b>9</b>
<b>G S Woodpecker</b>	20	17	18	<b>18</b>	15	<b>14</b>
<b>Magpie</b>	34	34	40	<b>36</b>	37	<b>31</b>
<b>Jay</b>	22	18	19	<b>20</b>	11	<b>16</b>
<b>Jackdaw</b>	29	33	34	<b>32</b>	32	<b>31</b>
<b>Rook</b>	22	15	19	<b>19</b>	15	<b>15</b>
<b>Carrion Crow</b>	48	46	52	<b>49</b>	46	<b>49</b>
<b>Raven</b>	18	16	21	<b>18</b>	22	<b>14</b>
<b>Goldcrest</b>	9	6	22	<b>12</b>	9	<b>5</b>
<b>Blue Tit</b>	32	32	36	<b>33</b>	30	<b>27</b>
<b>Great Tit</b>	30	30	32	<b>31</b>	34	<b>31</b>
<b>Coal Tit</b>	15	13	13	<b>14</b>	9	<b>12</b>
<b>Marsh Tit</b>	4	5	4	<b>4</b>	3	<b>2</b>
<b>Skylark</b>	32	30	36	<b>33</b>	37	<b>31</b>
<b>Swallow</b>	38	42	46	<b>42</b>	43	<b>37</b>
<b>House Martin</b>	16	19	19	<b>18</b>	19	<b>12</b>
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	10	9	10	<b>10</b>	10	<b>11</b>

Chiffchaff	33	31	33	32	34	28
Willow Warbler	20	20	22	21	27	24
Blackcap	36	31	35	34	32	32
Garden Warbler	7	7	9	8	10	9
Whitethroat	13	10	13	12	18	13
Nuthatch	14	12	14	13	10	12
Treecreeper	7	5	7	6	2	6
Wren	41	44	48	44	46	45
Starling	12	8	12	11	11	12
Dipper	6	6	9	7	5	7
Blackbird	39	41	42	41	43	45
Song Thrush	33	25	29	29	32	33
Mistle Thrush	16	14	29	20	13	14
Robin	41	43	44	43	43	42
Whinchat	7	8	8	8	7	8
Stonechat	9	18	18	15	15	14
Wheatear	13	17	12	14	7	12
Duncock	34	33	35	34	33	27
House Sparrow	26	25	29	27	24	22
Grey Wagtail	11	13	15	13	8	9
Pied/White Wagtail	14	15	26	18	23	14
Meadow Pipit	24	20	26	23	23	25
Chaffinch	42	42	44	43	42	42
Greenfinch	14	12	22	16	9	7
Goldfinch	24	22	29	25	31	31
Siskin	4	7	10	7	6	6
Linnet	13	15	21	16	21	16
Bullfinch	28	15	16	20	20	16
Yellowhammer	13	15	16	15	18	16
Reed Bunting	9	8	7	8	10	10

*Additional species in alphabetical order*

Barn Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-
Black Redstart	-	1	-	1	-	-
Cormorant	-	2	-	1	2	-
Grasshopper Warbler	1	4	1	2	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	3	11	1	5	5	5
Great Crested Grebe	1	-	-	1	1	1
Harrier (unidentified).	-	-	-	-	2	-
Hobby	2	3	6	4	1	2
Kingfisher	1	2	1	1	1	-
Lady Amherst's Pheasant	-	1	-	1	1	1
Lammergeier	-	-	3	1	-	-
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	3	3	2	3	1
Lesser Redpoll	1	-	-	1	2	2
Little Egret	-	2	-	1	-	-
Little Owl	1	1	-	1	1	-
Marsh Harrier	-	-	1	1	-	-
Mute Swan	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pied Flycatcher	1	-	-	1	-	1
Red Kite	2	2	1	2	3	3
Red Legged Partridge	1	1	-	1	1	-

Redstart	1	5	-	2	5	3
Sand Martin	1	2	-	1	-	-
Shelduck	-	-	-	-	1	-
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	-	1	-
Spotted Flycatcher	-	1	1	1	3	1
Teal	1	-	-	1	1	-
Tree Pipit	7	6	9	7	6	9
Tufted Duck	-	-	2	1	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>80</b>

**\*SMALL Notable decrease.** Lower number of squares than in any of the 2014-16 survey years in May. Or, not recorded, but recorded in May two of the 2014-16 survey years.

**\*LARGE Notable decrease.** In less than half the number of squares of the mean 2014-16 number for May. Or, not recorded, but recorded in all three 2014-16 survey years.

**\*Notable increase.** Higher number of squares than in any of the survey years or in more than twice the 2014-16 mean number. Or, recorded, but not recorded in more than one 2014-16 survey year.

Charts. Two examples of species that showed a decrease in the number of squares in which they were recorded in 2018 – Swift and Greenfinch.

