

SOUTH BRENT PARISH BIRD SURVEY

2014-16

www.brentbirdsurvey.co.uk

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



Dipper



Starling



Willow Tit



Greenfinch

Photos: Steve Hopper

Compiled by Phil Dean, Mike Goss, Paul Heatley, Dave MacDiarmid & Peter Reay

Dedicated to the memory of Barbara Lodge (1924-2014), who started watching birds in South Brent in the 1930s, and became a regular contributor to the Brent Bird Survey until her death in June 2014

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SUMMARY

1. The three-year Brent Bird Survey started in January 2014 and covers the 52 OS 1-km grid squares which comprise the parish of South Brent. Small grants received by Brent Birders from South Brent Parish Council and Sustainable South Brent, have been used to help run the survey, publish reports and hold meetings.
2. The aims are to provide a record of birds and some 'non-birds' (mammals, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies) in the parish, and to enhance awareness, enjoyment and knowledge of local wildlife through participation in the survey.
3. Survey forms are filled in by observers and submitted monthly for analysis using a Microsoft Excel database developed for the survey. A website www.brentbirdssurvey.co.uk has also been developed and is used for posting survey details, summary results, news of meetings, interesting sightings and photographs.
4. Over 50 observers submitted bird records during the year, and each month records were received from at least 25. All 52 squares were visited by at least one observer each month.
5. A total of 106 bird species were recorded during 2014, with monthly totals ranging from 64 in January to 80 in May. Species recorded per square varied from nine to 64, reflecting differences in habitat and number of visits. More than half the species (62) were recorded breeding in the parish.
6. The most widespread species were Carrion Crow, Buzzard, Swallow and Wren, all occurring in at least 48 squares over the year. A further 17 species were recorded in at least 40 squares. The highest maximum flock sizes were recorded for Starling and Woodpigeon (1,000 plus), and flocks of 100 or more occurred in a further eight species.
7. Rabbit and Grey Squirrel were the most widespread among 20 species of mammal recorded, and Frog the most widespread among six species of reptiles and amphibians. Meadow Brown was the most widespread of the 29 species of butterfly.
8. Unexpected species included Dartford Warbler, Firecrest, Goshawk, Greenshank, and Willow Tit among the birds, and Brown Hare, Fallow Deer and Red Deer among the mammals. A notable absence was Adder.
9. The weather in 2014 was exceptionally wet at the start of the year but the summer months were generally drier and warmer than usual. Carrying out the survey over three years increases the amount of data on which to draw conclusions and helps to compensate for any exceptional features pertaining to particular years. In 2015 the survey will be repeated, but with more emphasis on gaining access to private land, finding evidence of breeding and recording non-birds more effectively.
10. In conclusion, the aims of the survey have, to some extent, been achieved at the end of the first year, but there is plenty of scope for furthering them over the next two years.

More details can be found below, and even more on the website www.brentbirdssurvey.co.uk

Background

A group of local bird watchers, soon to be known as Brent Birders, started to meet in 2011. After two years of informal meetings in the village pubs, and occasional field trips, the possibility of carrying out a parish bird survey was raised and discussed. Skills and experience within the group (identification and IT skills; experience of other survey work) suggested that such a survey was feasible, and would also provide a suitable focus for the group's interests. A procedure was designed, loosely based on established bird survey methodology, and a pilot survey carried out in the autumn of 2013. This was successful, and with only minor changes to the methodology, the full Brent Bird Survey (BBS) was launched in January 2014.

Brent Birders also organise meetings and talks to help maintain and stimulate an interest in wildlife; these are open to all, and usually attract attendances in excess of 30. Speakers in 2014 included Richard Fox (Butterfly Conservation), Monica Hazell (local butterfly expert), Mike Langman (artist and former County Bird Recorder) and John Walters (local artist and naturalist). Collections at these meetings have enabled us to make a donation to Butterfly Conservation and to sponsor four species in the forthcoming *Devon Bird Atlas*.

Aims

- ***To provide a record of the birds (and some other wildlife) to be found in the parish of South Brent***
- ***To enhance awareness, enjoyment and knowledge of local wildlife.***

Scope

- ***Area.*** See Map 1. Broadly the parish of South Brent, but more specifically the 52 OS 1-km grid squares which have at least 10% of their area within the parish boundary. For some of the analysis this area is divided into three zones:
 - North** (moorland), 20 squares;
 - Central** (including the village), 18 squares; and
 - South** (outside the Dartmoor National Park boundary, and south of the A38), 14 squares.
- ***Period.*** Three years, 2014-2016, for the survey, although the final report will include records and information from before this period.
- ***Species.*** All bird species in the wild, and, optionally, some 'non-birds' - butterflies, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. The approach is simply to record what is encountered, but occasionally observers have been asked to make a special effort to find certain species, e.g., Tawny Owl.
- ***Records.*** Species seen or heard in each 1-km square in each month form the basic bird records, with the option of adding further information on maximum numbers and breeding. For non-birds in 2014, records comprised presence or absence in a square, irrespective of month.
- ***Participation.*** Open to anyone.

Input and output

Survey forms have been produced, for both birds and non-birds. These are available as printed or electronic versions, and can be downloaded from the website. Most people use these forms as email attachments to send their records in each month, but other routes are acceptable, including leaving paper forms at *artworks* for collection, as an email message or by phone. Records are initially received by Mike and Peter who may query any unusual records with observers before accepting, rejecting, or recommending submission to the Devon Birds County Recorder. Records on paper forms are typed up onto electronic forms before all are sent to Dave, who designed and operates the Microsoft Excel database used to process the data. In most cases, the records are then simply copied and pasted in as raw data.

A monthly output, usually produced within three weeks of the end of each month, has been made possible by the prompt submission of monthly records, and the machinations of the database. Initially the output from Dave is in the form of monthly and cumulative spreadsheets sent to the other organisers. From these, Phil updates maps and other information on the website www.brentbirdsurvey.co.uk (built by Phil, webmaster), and Peter produces a monthly summary sheet, both for the website and for email distribution by Mike to all on the Brent Birders mailing list. Non-bird records have been collated separately by Paul.

Links with other organisations

- **South Brent Parish Council.** A grant of £100 towards the printing and publicity costs of running the survey was received from the South Brent Community Benefit Fund. The Parish Newsletter has been used to promote the survey and report results.
- **Sustainable South Brent.** A grant of £100 towards the costs of running the survey and holding meetings was received from the SSB Sustainability Fund. The SSB Bulletin has been used to promote the survey and report results.
- **Devon Birds, www.devonbirds.org.** Devon Birds has been very supportive of the survey from its inception, and the Chairman, George Harris, was present at the launch in January 2014. Several items on the survey have appeared in *The Harrier* newsletter, and a talk on the survey was recently given to the Plymouth branch. There will be an exchange of records between BBS and Devon Birds, and aspects of the survey will eventually be written up for publication in the *Devon Birds* journal. The County Recorder has already given useful advice on the identification of some species, and the decisions of the Rarities Committee will be vital in maintaining standards of record acceptance.
- **Dartmoor Study Group.** Several Brent Birders are also members of the Dartmoor Study Group which is involved with the study of birds on Dartmoor. One of its regular surveys is the Goosander Roost Survey, and monthly dawn and dusk counts on the Avon Dam Reservoir are providing information both for this survey and the BBS.

Summary of 2014 results for birds

This section, and the next, will summarise the main findings. More detailed information is available on the website. Note that a RECORD comprises a species, a month, a square and an observer. A VISIT is a list of records submitted by one observer for a specified square and month; it may be the result of one brief visit to a square, or an accumulation of observations made during the month.

How did we do?

- All 52 squares were visited by at least one observer each month from April onwards, and at least 48 were visited in January, February and March.
- Records were submitted by over 50 observers during the year, and by at least 30 in most months. Between them, they submitted over 24,000 records during the year.
- Each square received, on average, 39 visits during the year, but this ranged from 11 to 127 (Map 1), and was highest in the Central Zone (Table 1):

Table 1. Annual number of visits per square

	Lowest number of visits per square	Highest number of visits per square	Average number of visits per square
North	11	43	23
Central	33	127	62
South	19	63	33
OVERALL	11	127	39

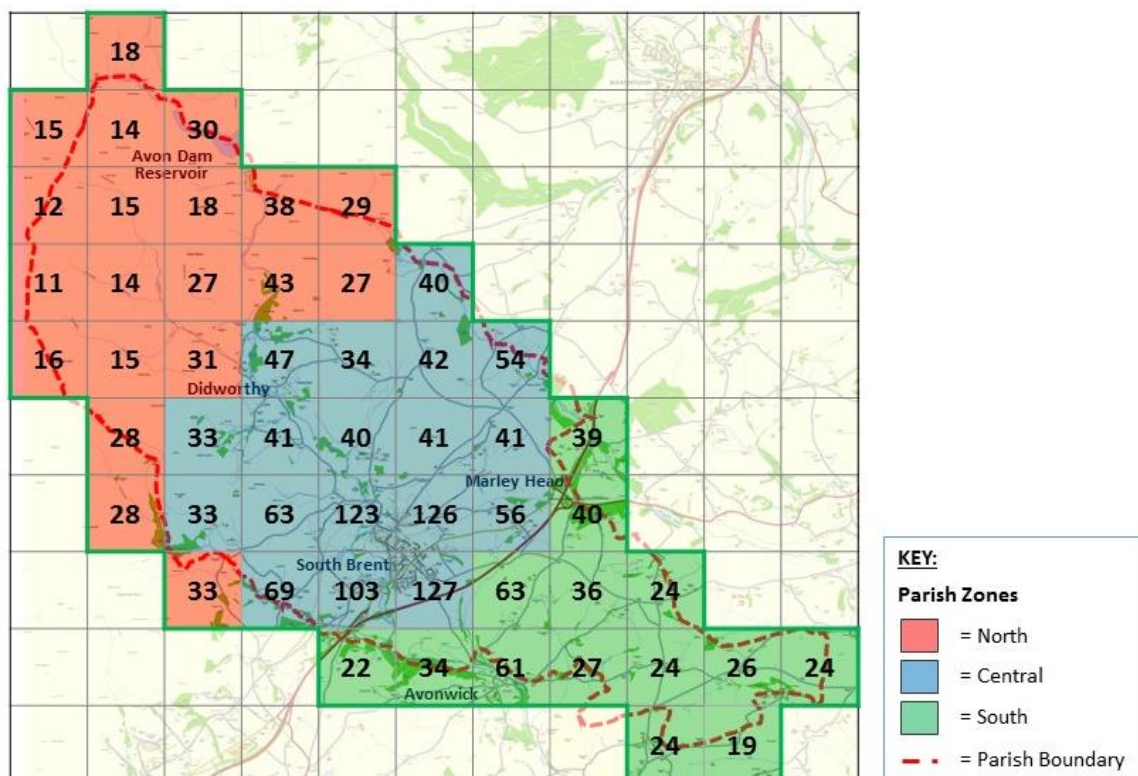
- About half the observers sent in records from a single square during the year, but two visited all 52 squares (Table 2). The number of squares visited *per month* also ranged from one to 52:

Table 2. Number of squares visited per observer

Number of squares visited during year	Number of observers
50-52	2
30-49	2
10-29	8
2-9	14
One	27

- The number of people participating in the survey has been higher than expected, and, encouragingly, this has included several new to wildlife recording. Although most observers concentrate on recording what is in their garden, and hence in a single square, the number of square visits per month has increased during the year.

Map 1: Bird Survey area, parish boundary and the total number of visits to each square during 2014.



What species were found?

The species recorded in 2014 are listed in Table 3, grouped first into wetland birds, large land birds and small land birds and then into residents, summer visitors, winter visitors and occasional visitors. The number of species (N) in each group are shown and species which bred are shown in bold.

TABLE 3	RESIDENTS - present all year	SUMMER VISITORS - mostly or entirely present in spring and summer	WINTER VISITORS - mostly or entirely present in autumn and winter	OCCASIONAL - including those of unknown status	N
Wetland birds including gulls and waders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dipper • Grey Heron • Grey Wagtail • Herring Gull • Mallard • Moorhen • Mute Swan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Goose • Little Grebe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Plover • Goosander • Snipe • Wigeon • Woodcock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black-headed Gull • Common Sandpiper • Cormorant • Curlew • Great Black-backed Gull • Greenshank • Great Crested Grebe • Kingfisher • Lesser Black-backed Gull • Little Egret • Mandarin Duck • Muscovy Duck • Teal 	27
Large land birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buzzard • Carrion crow • Collared Dove • Green Woodpecker • Great Spotted Woodpecker • Jackdaw • Jay • Kestrel • Magpie • Pheasant • Raven • Rook • Sparrowhawk • Stock Dove • Tawny Owl • Woodpigeon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuckoo • Hobby 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barn Owl • Goshawk • Harrier (unidentified) • Little Owl • Merlin • Peregrine • Red Kite • Red-legged Partridge 	26
Small land birds (songbirds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackbird • Blackcap • Blue Tit • Bullfinch • Chaffinch • Chiffchaff • Coal Tit • Dunnock • Goldcrest • Goldfinch • Great Tit • Greenfinch • House Sparrow • Long-tailed Tit • Marsh Tit • Meadow Pipit • Mistle Thrush • Nuthatch • Pied Wagtail • Reed Bunting • Robin • Siskin • Skylark • Song Thrush • Starling • Stonechat • Treecreeper • Wren • Yellowhammer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Warbler • House Martin • Linnets • Redstart • Spotted Flycatcher • Swallow • Swift • Tree Pipit • Wheatear • Whinchat • Whitethroat • Willow Warbler 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldfare • Redwing • Ring Ouzel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Redstart • Dartford Warbler • Firecrest • Lesser Redpoll • Pied Flycatcher • Sand Martin • Sedge Warbler • Willow Tit • Yellow Wagtail 	53
N	52	16	8	30	106

WETLAND BIRDS (27 species). The parish is not awash with wetlands. The largest body, the Avon Dam Reservoir, probably because of its altitude (300 m) and lack of cover, generally attracts few birds (often none at all), and on the fast flowing River Avon and its tributaries only Dipper, Grey Wagtail and Goosander are regularly seen. Other lakes and ponds are on private land, and so not readily accessible. It is not surprising, therefore, that wetland birds account for only a quarter of the total species recorded, and this includes some species such as Herring Gull, Golden Plover and Woodcock which are effectively land birds in Brent. Almost half the species in this group were recorded only occasionally, but most of the rest were recorded in all, or nearly all, months. The most widespread and conspicuous species in this group was the Herring Gull, mostly seen flying over, but also occurring commonly in fields and built up areas.

Moorhen and Mallard occurred in all months, and Canada Goose and Little Grebe in most, but these last two Devon residents are best regarded as summer visitors to the parish. Goosander is also resident in Devon, but in the parish they mainly occur in winter. Waders occurred only in small numbers, the most regular being Snipe and Golden Plover on the moor in winter. A Greenshank was an unexpected visitor in July. Although common on Devon estuaries, it is a rare passage migrant on Dartmoor.

LARGE LAND BIRDS (26 species). A rather arbitrary division, including raptors, owls, pigeons, corvids and others, accounted for a quarter of the species recorded, including some of the most widespread (Carrion Crow, Buzzard) and abundant (Woodpigeon, Jackdaw) species. Most species were resident, with two summer visitors, no winter visitors and seven others considered to be occasional visitors. Species such as Peregrine, Goshawk and Barn Owl may well be present throughout the year, but so far the records do not indicate this. Although Dartmoor is the county stronghold for Goshawk, it was a welcome surprise to have some records from the parish. It was also encouraging to know that at least one Barn Owl visited the parish during the year.



Little Grebe on nest



Buzzard



Goldfinch

All photos: Steve Hopper

SMALL LAND BIRDS (53 species). This group contains all the songbirds (tits, warblers, finches etc.), and most of the species likely to be found in gardens. About half of them are residents, about a quarter summer visitors and the rest mostly occasional visitors. Several of the species were very widespread, such as Wren, Blackbird, Robin and Chaffinch, but so also was Swallow, even though only present for part of the year.

Stonechat and Chiffchaff have been included among the residents, as they were recorded in 11 months and likely to be present all year. Blackcap was recorded in all months, but rather than being resident, this species includes both summer visitors (British breeders wintering in southern Europe) and winter visitors (East European breeders wintering in the British Isles). All three of these species were much more common in the summer months, as were Linnets which behaved like summer visitors to Brent, although they are resident in Devon as a whole. The other summer visitors listed are all long distance migrants wintering in Africa.

The most obvious winter visitors were Redwing and Fieldfare, both widespread and often abundant, not only in winter but also on passage in autumn. Although in much smaller numbers, Ring Ouzels were a prominent feature

of the autumn and, unusually this year, there were winter records too. Unlikely to be passing through are Lesser Redpoll and Willow Tit. Both breed on Dartmoor, but their status in Brent is not yet clear. Willow Tit was recorded from two village gardens in July and August. Perhaps only one bird was involved, but at least it called (confirming identification) and posed for a photograph. Hopefully there is a breeding population nearby.

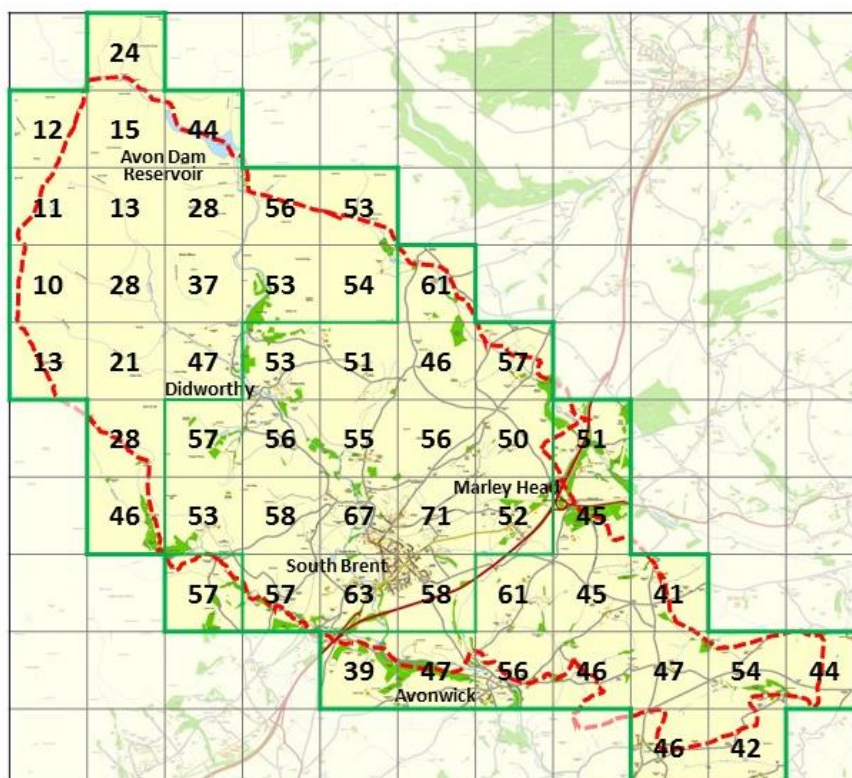
How many species?

- A total of 106 bird species were recorded in 2014, a reasonable number for a small inland area like South Brent; for comparison, about 270 species are recorded in the whole of Devon each year.
- The number of species recorded per month ranged from 64 (January) to 80 (May). In general, more species were found in the summer months. At least one new species was found each month, the maximum being eight (mostly summer visitors) in May.
- The number of species recorded per square ranged from nine to 69 for the whole year (Map 2), with an average of 44, but this varied between the three zones (Table 4). The differences largely reflect the lower number of species on open moorland, compared to the lower altitude squares, with their greater range of habitats and better coverage by observers. In a few moorland squares in winter, there appeared to be no birds present at all.

Table 4: Number of species per square and zone

	Lowest per square	Highest per square	Average per square	Total species
North	9	56	32	84
Central	44	69	55	99
South	39	59	46	75
OVERALL	9	69	44	106

Map 2: Total number of bird species recorded in each square during 2014



When and where?

- Information is now available on **when** (months) and **where** (squares) each species occurred, and how **widespread** they were (number of squares). Some examples are shown in Maps 3a-3h, with the accompanying bar charts.
- Species varied in **when** they occurred - already referred to in distinguishing between residents and visitors (Table 3). About half the species have been recorded every month, but eight appeared in only one month – effectively the Brent 2014 rarities. Some of these were very fleeting, and only seen for a few minutes, such as the Greenshank and Dartford Warbler, or not at all – an invisible calling Curlew as it passed overhead on one day in June!
- Species also varied in **where** they occurred. Many common species are widespread throughout the lowland areas of the parish (Central and South Zones), but less so on the moor (North Zone), e.g. Blackbird. A few are mostly found on the moor, e.g., Stonechat. However, these patterns can vary with the time of year so that Meadow Pipit and Skylark are mostly found on the moor in summer, but in lowland areas in the winter. Most wetland species are only found in squares containing bodies of water, irrespective of zone, e.g., Dipper and Goosander.
- The Brent rarities, and several others, only occurred in one square, but at the other extreme were the more **widespread** species, recorded from 40 or more squares, or about 75% of the total (Table 5). Among these, only Carrion Crow was recorded from all squares during the year, although the most in any one month was 49. All in this group were residents, apart from Swallow, which only occurred in more than 30 squares between May and September. Even among residents, the number of squares typically showed some monthly variation.

Table 5. The most widespread species – recorded in at least 40 squares during the year

Number of squares	Species
52	Carrion Crow
49	Buzzard, Swallow
48	Wren
46	Blackbird, Chaffinch, Meadow Pipit, Raven, Starling
44	Robin
43	Herring Gull, Magpie, Woodpigeon
42	Blue Tit, Chiffchaff, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Skylark
41	Mistle Thrush
40	Great Tit, Song Thrush

How many birds?

The survey did not set out to record numbers of birds in the parish, but for some species, maximum counts (of birds seen together in a flock, or at a feeding station) can be useful when comparing species, squares, months and eventually years. As an example, the species with the highest maximum counts are shown in Table 6. Although high counts were recorded for Woodpigeon, these were for birds flying over the parish on their autumn migration. All other species were gathering in the parish to feed or roost, and the highest of these was 2,000 Starlings at a farm near the A38 in December.

Table 6. Species with maximum counts of 50 or more

Maximum Count	Species
1,000 or more	Starling, Woodpigeon
500 or more	Redwing, Fieldfare
100 or more	Jackdaw, Herring Gull, Pied Wagtail, House Martin, Swallow, Rook
50 or more	Carrion Crow, Goldfinch, Mistle Thrush, House Sparrow, Linnet, Goldfinch, Meadow Pipit

Which species bred?

Observers were asked to indicate whether any of the species they recorded were breeding, using established evidence for probable or confirmed breeding (such as nest found, parents entering nest-hole or carrying food, newly fledged young). In total, 62 species were recorded breeding in the parish in 2014 (indicated in Table 3), but this is probably an underestimate because several species were present in suitable habitat in the breeding season, e.g. Garden Warbler, but the necessary evidence was not obtained. The information obtained also shows where the different species are breeding (see Map 3 for examples).

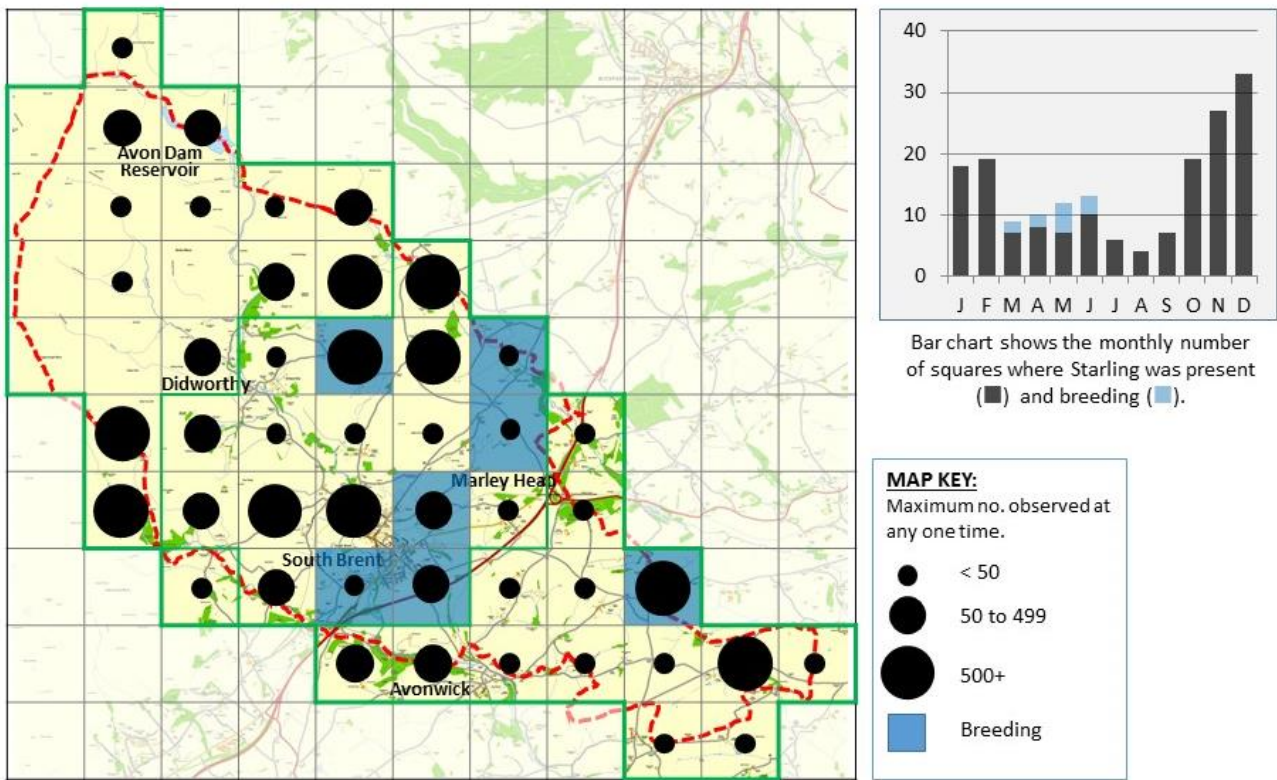
Starlings - how much have we learned?

The Starling is one of the most widespread, abundant and conspicuous species in the parish, even though declining nationally. Indeed, it was Starlings that prompted the survey. In early 2013 up to 10,000 roosted at Aish, and their comings and goings were studied in some detail. This raised questions about their distribution and occurrence throughout the year, and also those of other species, which a parish survey would help to answer. So it seems appropriate here to focus on this species as an illustration of the sort of information already available on the birds of Brent parish. What do we now know about Starlings?

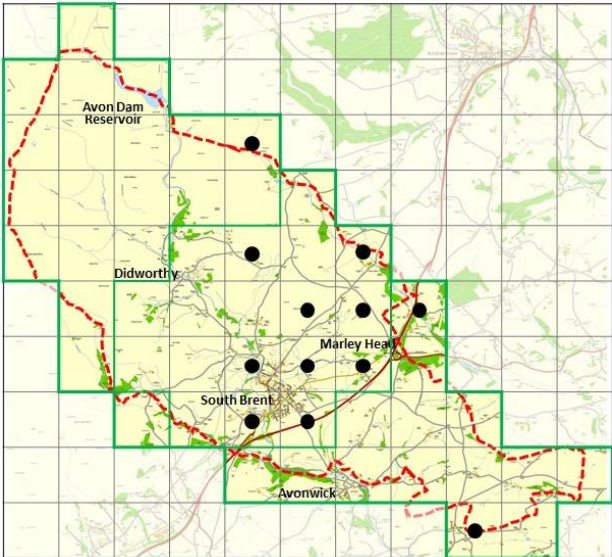
- Occur in all months of the year.
- Recorded in 46 squares, and have only not been recorded in six moorland squares in the North Zone. (Map 3a)
- Recorded in many more squares in winter than in the summer, the number varying from five in August to 33 in December. (Maps 3a-c)
- Maximum counts varied from seven in April to 2,000 in December.
- Breeding recorded in seven squares. (Map 3a)

A small number of Starlings in Brent are present the whole year round, and breed in the parish. However, their numbers are greatly augmented between October and March by migrants from the continent (based on studies elsewhere). Feeding flocks and those gathering around roost sites can be quite conspicuous, but most people encounter them on their garden feeders where they help to make bird feeding an expensive hobby. Perhaps fortunately, the big flocks of Starlings mostly feed in fields, around cattle sheds and often on the open moor. Although widespread and seemingly versatile in their requirements, they were not found everywhere in 2014. For example, there has been only one record from Lutton, and a well-provisioned garden at Pennaton has so far failed to attract any at all.

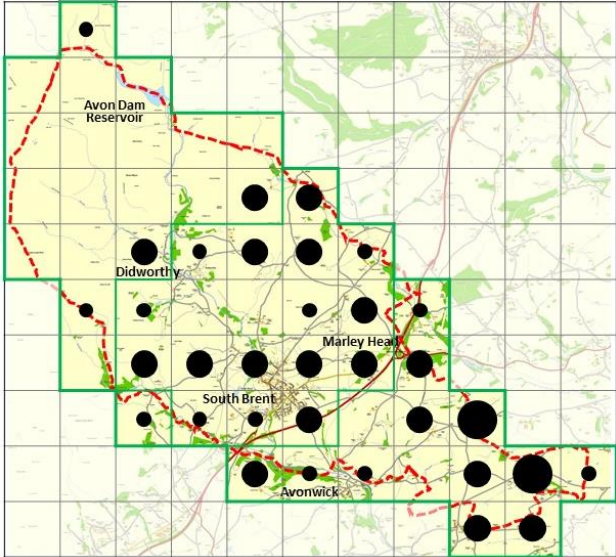
Map 3a: Distribution of Starling in 2014.



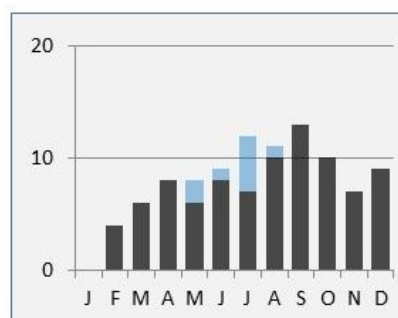
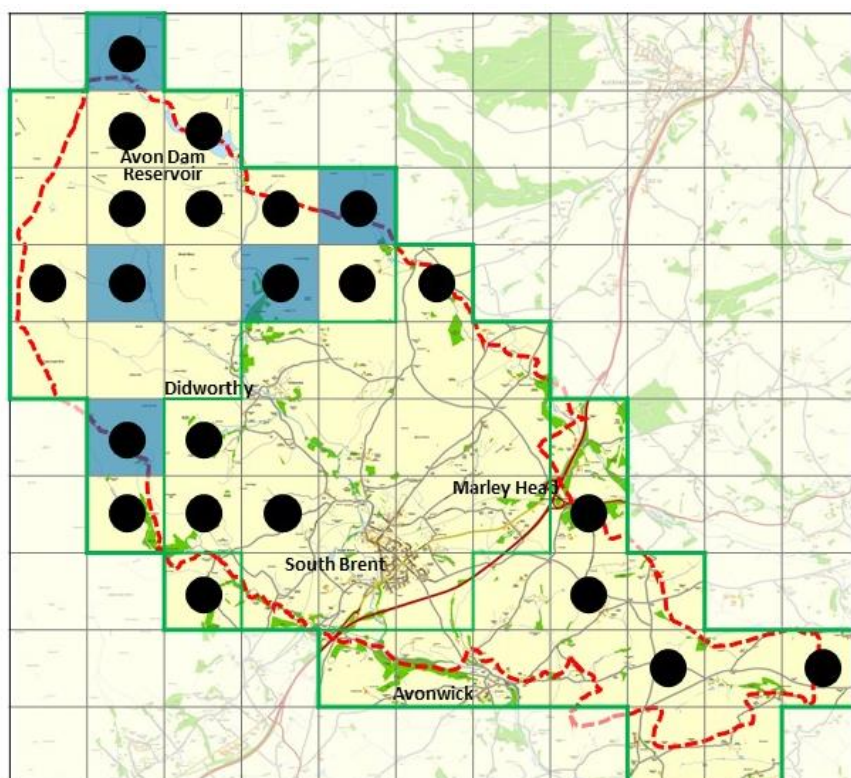
Map 3b: Distribution of Starling in May 2014



Map 3c: Distribution of Starling in December 2014



Map 3d: Distribution of Stonechat in 2014. Present most months, mostly on moor.

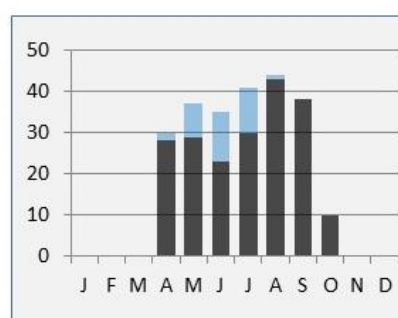
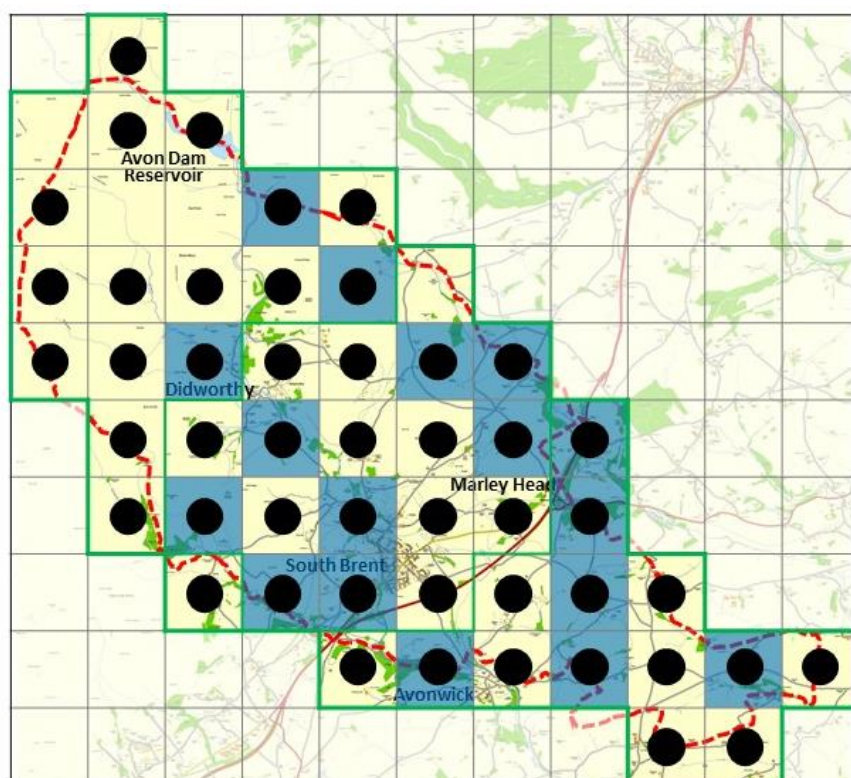


Bar chart shows the monthly number of squares where Stonechat was present (■) and breeding (■).

MAP KEY:

- Present
- Breeding

Map 3e: Distribution of Swallow in 2014. Very widespread summer visitor.

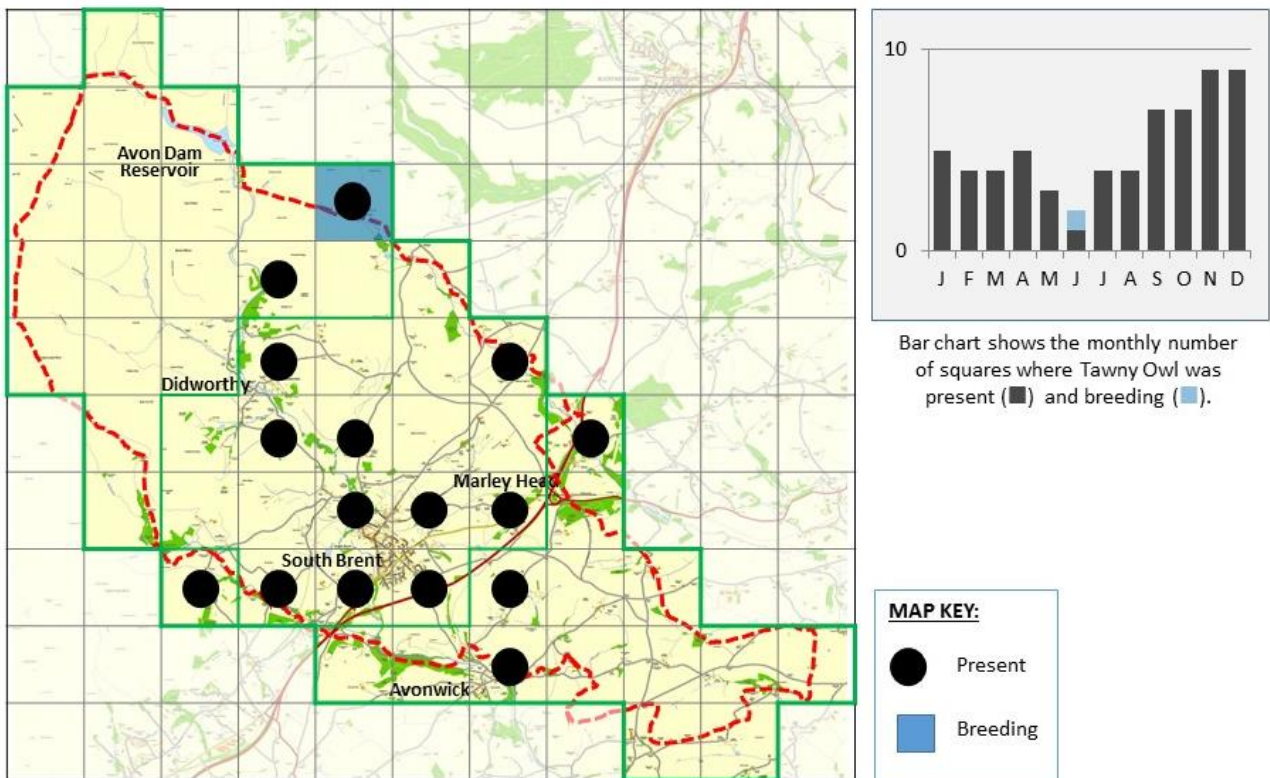


Bar chart shows the monthly number of squares where Swallow was present (■) and breeding (■).

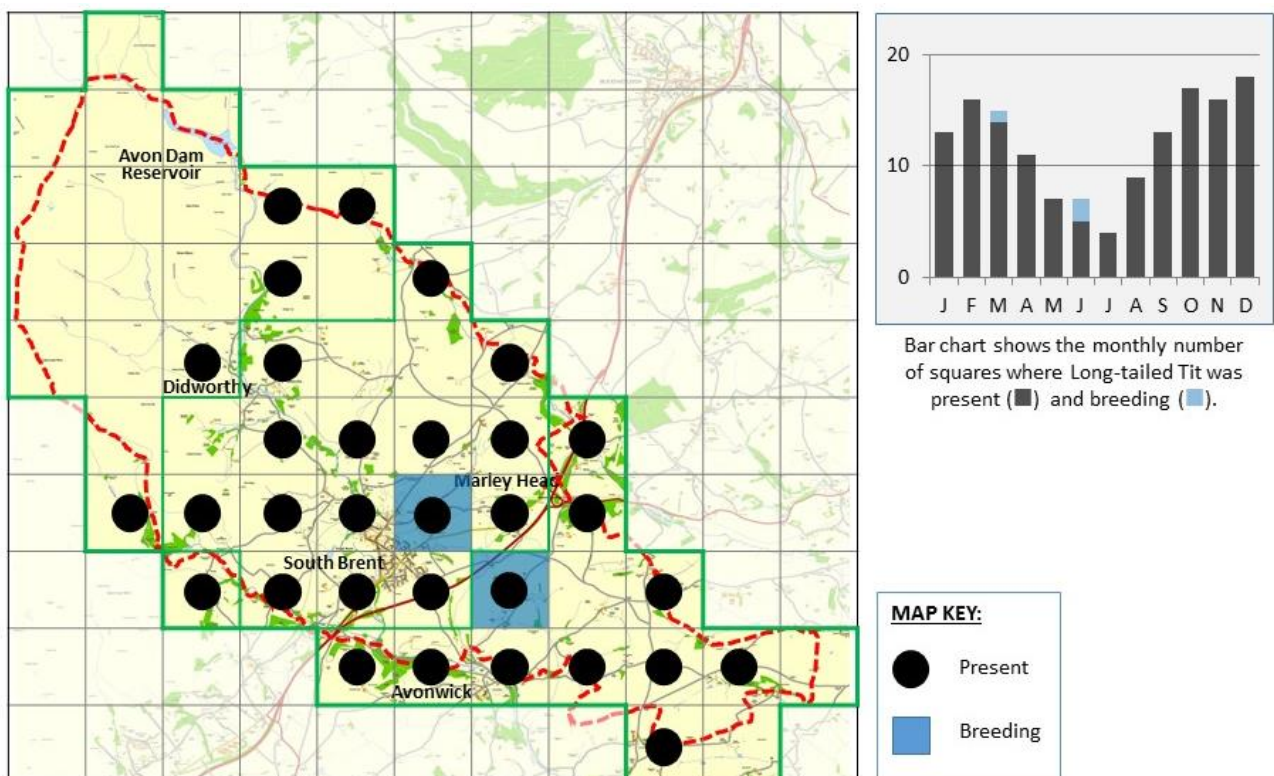
MAP KEY:

- Present
- Breeding

Map 3f: Distribution of Tawny Owl in 2014. Resident, mostly in Central Zone.



Map 3g: Distribution of Long-tailed Tit in 2014. Widespread resident, absent from open moor, fewer records in summer.



Summary of 2014 results for non-birds

In the course of recording birds, observers have also been invited to submit records of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies for the squares they have visited, irrespective of month. Over the year, 15 observers submitted non-bird records, and the species recorded are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: The non-bird species recorded in 2014, with the number of squares in which each was recorded

Mammals	Rabbit (35), Grey Squirrel (29), Mole (26), Cat & Roe Deer (16), Fox (15), Mouse (all species) & Stoat (8), Badger & Hedgehog (7), Bat (all species) & Brown Rat (6), Shrew (all species) and Vole (all species) (5), Weasel (4), Brown Hare (2) and Dormouse, Fallow Deer, Ferret & Red Deer (1).
Reptiles and Amphibians	Frog (17), Toad (7), Lizard (6), Newt (all species) (4,) Slow-worm (3) and Grass Snake (1).
Butterflies	Meadow Brown (49), Green-veined White (44), Small Tortoiseshell & Speckled Wood (38), Red Admiral (37), Gatekeeper & Peacock (36), Ringlet (32), Small White (28), Large Skipper (24), Orange-tip (22), Small Heath (20), Comma (17), Small Copper (14), Common Blue (13), Wall Brown (12), Large White (10), Brimstone & Clouded Yellow (9), Holly Blue & Silver-wash Fritillary (8). Painted Lady (6), Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (5), Small Skipper (4), Marbled White (3), Green Hairstreak & Marsh Fritillary (2) and Purple Hairstreak (1).

Mammals

In general, mammals were not well recorded, partly because many, unlike birds, are nocturnal, but also because of the lack of expertise in, or enthusiasm for, identifying mammals from tracks, droppings, holes and so on. There were no records of any mammals in 13 squares, and the most species in any one square was seven. The most widely distributed was Rabbit (Table 7). Although possibly escapes, it was interesting that both Red and Fallow Deer were recorded as well as the more widespread Roe (Map 4). It was also a pleasant surprise to have records of Brown Hare, but the absence of Otter was disappointing, as there had been at least three reports in 2013.



Roe Deer with Fawn

Photo: Phil Dean

Reptiles and amphibians

The absence of Adders and only a single record of Grass Snake in 2014 was surprising, and for all species, there were fewer records than expected (Table 7). Frogs were better recorded than most (17 squares), often from clumps of spawn in late winter and spring, and it is possible that they occur in all squares, whereas Toads (seven squares), are probably absent from the moor.

Butterflies

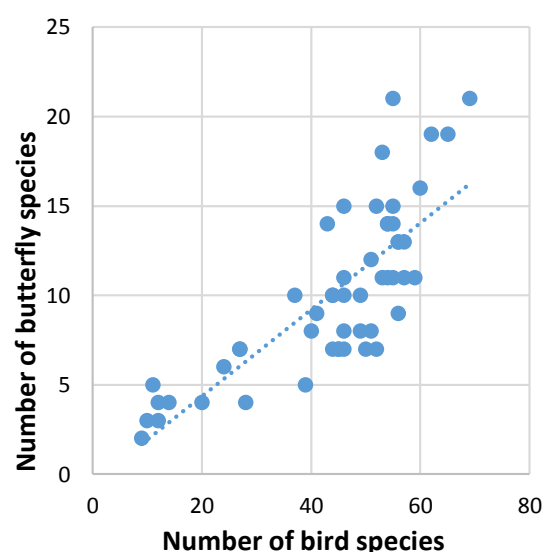
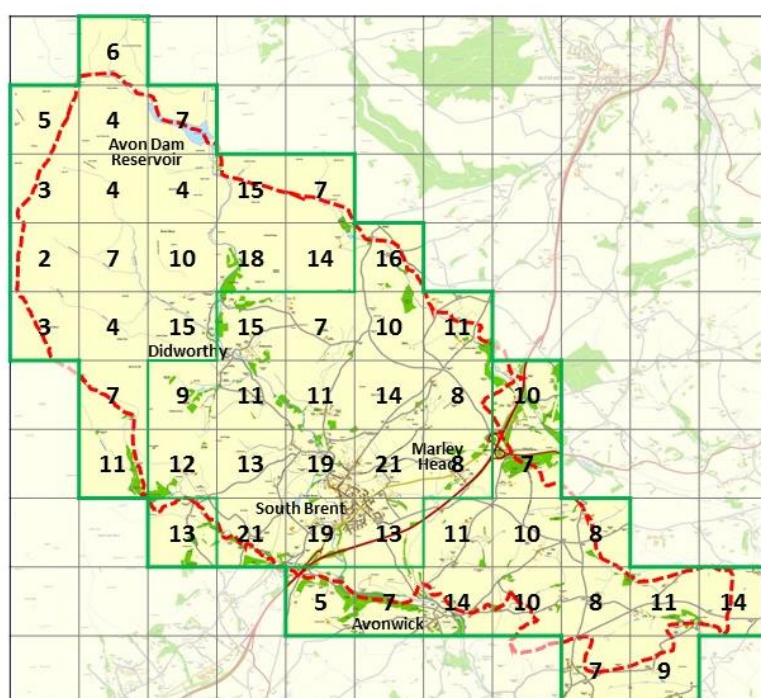
Twenty-nine species of butterfly were recorded in the parish in 2014, at least one species being recorded in every square (Map 4). For comparison, the number of species regularly seen in the whole of Devon each year is 43. The most widespread species was Meadow Brown (49 squares) and the most species per square was 21. The full list of species and number of squares occupied is given in Table 7. There were no real surprises, but it was encouraging to have records of three species of fritillary and two hairstreaks in the parish.



Marsh Fritillary Butterfly

Photo: Dave Scott

Map 4: Number of butterfly species per square recorded in 2014



Scatter diagram showing the relationship between the number of bird and butterfly species in each square. In general, squares with more birds have more butterflies.

2014 in context

From observations prior to 2014, we know that some species recorded in the parish in recent years were not recorded in 2014 (e.g. Brambling in 2013), that some species have occurred in higher numbers in the past (e.g. Starling in 2013) and that others were formerly much more widespread (e.g. Redstart in the 1960s). The latter example reflects an overall national decline in many species of farmland and woodland birds. There is only anecdotal evidence to support this at parish level, but at least the survey will provide sound data for 2014-16, and against this, any future changes should become apparent.

It is important to continue the survey over more than one year. Not only will this increase the amount of data on which conclusions can be based, but it will help to compensate for any exceptional features pertaining to particular years. So was 2014 exceptional? In terms of weather (Table 10), the first two months were exceptionally wet, but the summer was generally drier and warmer than usual. The latter probably resulted in 2014 being a 'bumper breeding season for most species', according to the British Trust for Ornithology.

Table 10: Mean monthly temperature and rainfall for South Brent in 2014

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Mean Temp °C	6.8	6.7	8.0	10.1	12.3	15.9	17.8	15.1	15.8	12.9	9.5	6.5
Total rainfall (mm)	510	388	142	208	163	116	44	204	15	268	274	173

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

The two aims have undoubtedly been achieved, but both are open-ended, and there is plenty of scope both for increasing our knowledge of the distribution and occurrence of birds and other wildlife in the parish, and for encouraging greater participation in the survey and appreciation of wildlife. An unexpected outcome has been the extent to which the survey has revitalised an enthusiasm for birds in some of the more experienced participants. Even more surprisingly, the survey has been a major factor in the recent decision of a Devon birdwatcher to move house and live in South Brent!

For 2015, at least, it is intended to refine and repeat the 2014 survey. This will give an opportunity to find species, likely to occur, but not found in 2014, and in general, the results will have more validity if based on more than one year's data. More effort will be put into gaining access to private land, finding evidence of breeding and recording non-birds on a monthly basis.

We hope to involve more observers in 2015. Anyone interested should contact us via the website or through Mike Goss mrgandjng@tiscali.co.uk and 01364 72539.

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Further information on wildlife relevant to this survey can be found on the following websites:

British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org
 Butterfly Conservation www.butterfly-conservation.org
 Devon Birds www.devonbirds.org
 Devon Wildlife Trust www.devonwildlifetrust.org
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds www.rspb.org.uk

