

Brent Bird Survey

January 2017 summary



The first month of the extended survey resulted in continued good coverage. All 52 squares were visited by at least one observer, and a total of 29 observers produced 1,931 records from 159 square visits. Fieldwork was less hampered by the rain and wind of some other recent winters, and the dry and often sunny weather was more conducive to getting out and searching for birds, especially as the cold spell towards the end of the month increased the likelihood of seeing something unusual.

The total of 72 species, contrasting with a 2014-16 average of 67, was the highest in January so far. Species not recorded in previous Januarys were **Barn Owl** (two squares), **Firecrest**, **Lapwing**, **Linnet** and **Short-eared Owl**. **Lapwing** (two flying over Overbrent on 26th) were not recorded at all during 2014-16, and these were the first recorded in Brent since 2010, presumably driven this way by cold weather elsewhere in the country. The only species present in previous Januarys, but not this one, were **Cormorant** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull**.

In general, the number of squares in which most species were recorded, was very similar to the previous years. Only three species, **Marsh Tit**, **Nuthatch** and **Peregrine**, were recorded in substantially fewer squares, but 11 were found in more: **Chaffinch**, **Chiffchaff**, **Collared Dove**, **Dunnock**, **Fieldfare**, **Goldcrest**, **Goldfinch**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Jay**, **Reed Bunting** and **Stock Dove**.

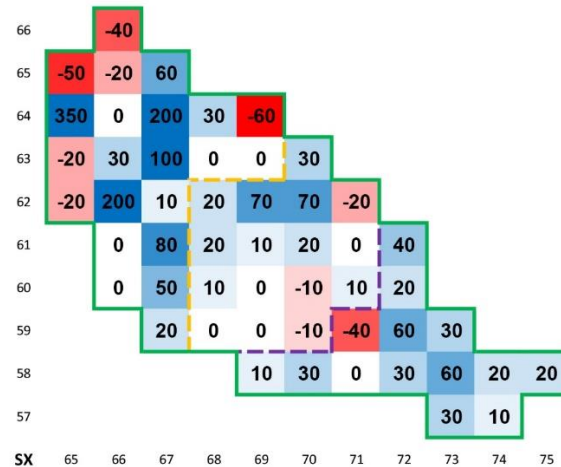
This suggests that what little change there has been, was mostly positive, both in terms of the number of species and the number of squares occupied by some of those species. The increases may reflect real increases in the distribution of the birds, but with knowledge gained over the last three years we have become better at finding and recording birds, so this also may have played a part. However, it is the species showing decreases and absences that are potentially of more relevance. Three of these are relatively scarce visitors to the parish, and do not breed here, but **Marsh Tit** and **Nuthatch** are resident breeders, and the latter is regarded as common, so its decrease from a 2014-16 average of 19 to 13 in 2017 was a little unexpected. The decrease may be real, or it could just be reflecting how vocal and conspicuous the birds have been in different years. **Marsh Tit** is on the decline in Devon and nationally, and though never common, seemed to be struggling to maintain its hold in Brent at the end of 2016. Further data from the May survey and future years will hopefully give a more insight into these changes.

Table 1: BBS Number of squares per species per month per year - JANUARY

Year	2014	2015	2016	Mean	2017	Year	2014	2015	2016	Mean	2017
Canada Goose	-	2	-	2	1	House Sparrow	14	21	24	20	25
Mallard	9	5	7	7	9	Grey Wagtail	5	9	6	7	12
Goosander	5	2	3	3	3	Pied/White Wagtail	9	20	14	14	19
Pheasant	10	13	14	12	12	Meadow Pipit	4	19	16	13	13
Grey Heron	6	8	8	7	9	Chaffinch	28	30	29	29	34
Little Grebe	-	-	1	1	-	Brambling	-	-	-	-	-
Sparrowhawk	7	6	7	7	5	Greenfinch	7	10	8	8	10
Buzzard	23	31	26	27	35	Goldfinch	8	13	14	12	17
Kestrel	5	7	8	7	12	Siskin	4	3	6	4	3
Peregrine	2	2	5	3	1	Linnet	-	-	-	-	1
Moorhen	3	6	7	5	6	Bullfinch	9	11	8	9	19
Golden Plover	1	1	5	2	1	Yellowhammer	-	2	4	3	3
Snipe	3	8	10	7	8	Reed Bunting	-	1	2	2	4
Woodcock	1	1	3	2	3	Mute Swan	1	1	1	1	1
Black-headed Gull	2	2	-	2	1	Wigeon	1	1	2	1	1
Herring Gull FLYING	25	29	25	26	26	Kingfisher	1	1	1	1	2
Herring Gull LANDED	-	22	11	17	20	Lesser B-b Gull	2	-	2	2	-
Stock Dove	3	6	5	5	12	Great B-b Gull	1	3	1	2	1
Woodpigeon	23	33	33	30	30	Cormorant	1	1	3	2	-
Collared Dove	11	13	12	12	18	Little owl	1	-	-	1	-
Tawny Owl	5	6	6	6	6	Firecrest	-	-	-	-	1
Green Woodpecker	5	7	10	7	7	Teal	-	2	2	2	1
G S Woodpecker	14	17	13	15	16	Merlin	-	-	1	1	2
Magpie	27	36	36	33	38	Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	-	-
Jay	15	14	17	15	24	Red Kite	-	-	-	-	-
Jackdaw	19	28	32	26	31	Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-
Rook	12	13	16	14	15	Red Legged Partridge	-	-	-	-	-
Carrion Crow	35	46	50	44	47	Curlew	-	-	-	-	-
Corvids - mixed	7	6	1	5	4	Harrier sp.	-	-	-	-	-
Raven	13	25	22	20	19	Willow Tit	-	-	-	-	-
Goldcrest	12	12	18	14	19	Barn Owl	-	-	-	-	2
Blue Tit	26	35	30	30	36	Mandarin Duck	-	-	-	-	-
Great Tit	24	35	27	29	34	Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-
Coal Tit	15	23	16	18	17	Dartford Warbler	-	-	-	-	-
Marsh Tit	6	8	3	6	3	Little Egret	-	-	-	-	-
Skylark	1	7	5	4	6	Black Redstart	-	-	-	-	-
Long-tailed Tit	13	17	16	15	14	Hen Harrier	-	-	-	-	-
Chiffchaff	1	1	1	1	3	Jack Snipe	-	-	-	-	-
Blackcap	5	2	3	3	5	Yellow-browed Warbler	-	-	-	-	-
Nuthatch	15	22	20	19	13	Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	-	1
Treecreeper	6	8	8	7	6	Osprey	-	-	-	-	-
Wren	19	34	36	30	35	Pintail	-	-	1	1	1
Starling	18	26	12	19	25	Coot	-	-	1	1	-
Dipper	4	5	4	4	6	Snow Bunting	-	-	-	-	-
Ring Ouzel	-	3	-	1	-	Cirl Bunting	-	-	-	-	-
Blackbird	30	37	40	36	39	Tufted Duck	-	-	-	-	-
Fieldfare	6	13	15	11	17	Lapwing	-	-	-	-	1
Song Thrush	17	15	21	18	16						
Redwing	22	29	19	23	29						
Mistle Thrush	13	19	20	17	19						
Robin	29	38	37	35	40						
Stonechat	-	7	4	6	4						
Duncock	15	27	27	23	33						
						TOTALS	64	67	69	67	72

Key: 2014-2016 mean (minimum value = 1)
 absences and large decreases relative to 2014-16
 additions and large increases relative to 2014-16

Map 1: Increase (blue) and decrease (red) in species per square in January 2017 compared with the average of 2014-2016 (squares 1 to 49) or 2015-2016 (squares 50 to 52). Numbers are percentage values rounded down to the nearest 10%.



The species count per square was generally higher in January 2017 than the average for the survey except on the higher moor. Note that the moorland squares have only a small number of species in January and so the relatively large percentage swings are due to a change of one or two species having a significant impact on the numbers.

Contributors to the January 2017 survey were: Margaret & Philip Andrade, Dave & Jan Ayres, Eileen Blockly, Mick Bramich, John & Sylvia Caddick, John Cranch, Phil & Sue Dean, Andrew & Kit Ferguson, Mike & Jan Goss, Laurette Guest, Poppet Hall, Peter & Sylvia Hamilton, Helen Harvey, Paul & Barbara Heatley, Steve Hopper, Mike Ingram, John Luscombe, Dave MacDiarmid, Keith Male, Jonathan Nicholson, Dave & Kate Pakes, Jane Pickard, Adrian & Gaynor Platt, Peter Reay & Lesley Austin, Val Stanley, John Widdicombe, Barrie Whitehall and Julia & Robin Willoughby.