

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**HATFIELD FOREST BIRD WATCH**  
**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

## Introduction

The society's long involvement with Hatfield Forest has resulted in the production of many reports, particularly on the birds of the forest. This report, the fourteenth in the series, continues on the theme of a "Big Forest Bird Watch", in which members of the Society spent a morning recording as many as possible of the birds present in the area being surveyed. The number of areas surveyed depends on the number of people present; this year seven members attended on the day and this enabled surveys to be made in four of the five areas into which the forest has previously been divided for this purpose. The weather was bright and sunny and the forest looked magnificent in the early morning sunlight, with vast numbers of buttercups in flower on the forest plains and plentiful new foliage on the trees. No survey was undertaken in 2020 due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. As a result, the attached species count spreadsheet compares this year's results with those for the three years 2018, 2019 and 2021.

## Acknowledgements

The Society is indebted to The National Trust for their interest in such surveys and for their encouragement and the positive attitude always shown to the Society's members. Grateful thanks are due to the participants for their time and interest in undertaking such survey work.

## Participants

Nick Barber, Alastair Cook, Keith Mash, Bob Reed, Marion Swan, Chris Swan, Dave Webber.

## Methodology

Traditionally the Forest has been divided into five areas, described as northwest, northeast, southwest, southeast and lake. This year the surveyors sampled four of the five areas; the northwest area was not surveyed. The surveyors covered as much of their areas as was practicable and recorded both the total numbers seen for each species and also noted whether birds were breeding using the usual commonsense indicators, such as birds observed holding territory, sitting on nests, carrying food or nesting material, or the presence of young birds. Where young birds were counted, numbers are shown; otherwise "Y" is entered to indicate that breeding is considered likely to have occurred using the other criteria.

Survey teams were arranged as follows:

Northeast: Nick Barber, Keith Mash.

Southwest: Dave Webber.

Southeast: Alastair Cook, Bob Reed.

Lake: Marion Swan, Chris Swan.

## Results

The results are presented in a spreadsheet that is appended as an Excel document. For purposes of comparison and interest, the total numbers of birds recorded in the 2018, 2019 and 2021 surveys are shown in addition to this year's results, there being no results for 2020 for the reason stated above.

## Discussion

As with the surveys of previous years, it must be remembered that a survey such as this is not claimed to be comprehensive; it is simply a “snapshot” of those species seen on a particular occasion. As a result, a repeat survey a few days or even a few hours later may give different numbers of species, and indeed even additional or fewer species compared with this exercise. Nevertheless, since the methodology is essentially unchanged, the results of this survey may be compared with earlier years and valuable information may be gleaned on the status of the various species observed. Some duplication may occur; for example, the corvids are very mobile and it can be difficult to obtain accurate counts as the birds constantly come and go. This is also true of the Buzzard in this survey, where the birds were observed circling overhead before moving to different areas.

There are several encouraging aspects of this year’s survey. Two male Reed Warblers were holding territory in the reed bed and a male Reed Bunting was exhibiting territorial behaviour in the marsh area, with a female seen carrying food. Judging by the numbers seen, Jackdaws have had another successful year. A single Common Tern was observed this year on the new tern raft but there is now competition from Black-headed Gulls, with nests seen on the new and old rafts, plus another nest on the edge of the lake near the two rafts. Other breeding successes included Coot, Canada Goose and Mallard, all seen with young, albeit in small numbers most likely due to predation. Thus, the Coot on the Decoy Lake only had one visible juvenile, the Mallards on the lake had five ducklings compared with a report that they had seven a few days earlier and one of the pairs of Canada Geese had four goslings when first seen in the morning but only three a couple of hours later. No doubt there is probably a very well-fed Pike somewhere in the lake!

A Nuthatch was observed again this year, confirming the view that in some previous surveys although apparently missing, they were almost certainly around and may simply have been in another area of the forest. The limited evidence of breeding for some species should again not be viewed with too much gloom. Many species breed very early in the year and it is therefore not surprising that young are quite well developed by late May and become more adept at hiding from view. This is particularly true for the Dunnock, where relatively low numbers on this survey should not be seen as a cause for alarm.

No Cuckoo calls were heard this year, reflecting the national trend where the Cuckoo is becoming a scarce visitor. The total number of 40 species observed this year is lower than average but the total number of adult birds seen was a reasonably satisfying 483. In addition to the birds seen, many Rabbits were present including some very young ones.

Chris Swan  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

## BSNHS Hatfield Forest Bird Survey, Sunday 22nd May 2022

18ad	18y	19ad	19y	21ad	21y	22ad	22y	Species seen 2018 - 2022	NE ad	juv	NW ad	juv	SE ad	juv	SW ad	juv	Lake ad	juv	Comments
2	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	Great Crested Grebe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Little Grebe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Cormorant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Grey Heron	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	0	4	4	1	0	1	0	Mute Swan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
2	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	Greylag Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
42	0	23	0	24	0	50	4	Canada Goose	40	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	8	4	
0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	Shelduck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	Gadwall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
24	2	39	0	26	0	26	5	Mallard	2	0	0	0	1	0	9	0	14	5	
4	0	7	0	5	0	8	0	Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Sparrowhawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	Red Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
1	0	1	0	4	0	7	0	Buzzard	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	
1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	Kestrel	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Red-legged Partridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	0	6	0	5	0	3	0	Pheasant	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	
4	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	Moorhen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	1	8	1	5	0	4	1	Coot	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	
0	0	0	0	9	0	8	0	Black-headed Gull	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	Y	Nests on Tern raft and lake edge
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	Common Tern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Y	Adult on Tern raft
5	0	4	0	6	0	6	0	Stock Dove	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	
59	0	108	0	48	0	43	0	Woodpigeon	7	0	0	0	11	0	15	0	10	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Collared Dove	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Cuckoo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Barn Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Little Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Tawny Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	0	0	0	21	0	2	0	Swift	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
6	1	4	0	6	0	0	0	Green Woodpecker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6	0	9	0	5	0	3	Y	Great Spotted Woodpecker	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	Y	0	0	Birds feeding young
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Skylark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	0	2	0	7	0	4	0	Swallow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	Y	Looking for nest site
2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	House Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	Sand Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	Pied Wagtail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
22	0	51	0	42	0	42	0	Wren	1	0	0	0	9	0	28	0	4	0	
12	0	3	0	5	0	4	0	Dunnock	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	

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24	0	21	1	25	0	16	0	Robin	0	0	0	0	5	0	8	0	3	0		
39	0	44	0	33	0	22	0	Blackbird	3	0	0	0	2	0	11	0	6	0		
12	0	9	0	12	0	8	0	Song Thrush	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	1	0		
1	0	6	0	3	0	0	0	Mistle Thrush	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
3	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	Reed Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Y	Territorial behaviour	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Sedge Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	Lesser Whitethroat	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		
13	0	25	0	20	0	5	0	Whitethroat	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0		
2	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	Garden Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		
22	0	39	0	30	0	19	0	Blackcap	1	0	0	0	10	0	7	0	1	0		
20	1	27	0	28	0	28	0	Chiffchaff	0	0	0	0	7	0	11	0	10	0		
2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	Willow Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Goldcrest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	13	4	4	0	9	0	Long-tailed Tit	4	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0		
5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	Marsh Tit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Coal Tit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
44	0	52	0	30	0	25	0	Blue Tit	2	0	0	0	7	0	9	0	7	0		
12	0	10	0	26	0	13	0	Great Tit	3	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	0		
0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	Nuthatch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	Treecreeper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
8	0	8	0	6	0	1	0	Jay	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
7	0	7	0	12	1	9	0	Magpie	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0		
3	0	1	0	6	0	14	0	Rook	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	Y	Adults visiting nests	
10	0	11	0	12	0	10	0	Carrion Crow	8	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0		
82	0	152	0	96	1	67	0	Jackdaw	21	0	0	0	13	0	20	0	13	0		
0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	Starling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	House Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
24	0	27	0	17	0	13	0	Chaffinch	0	0	0	0	9	0	4	0	0	0		
2	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	Greenfinch	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Linnet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Goldfinch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	Bullfinch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yellowhammer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
3	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	Reed Bunting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Y	Adult carrying food	
<b>563</b>		<b>747</b>		<b>629</b>		<b>483</b>		sub totals	<b>107</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>84</b>		<b>154</b>		<b>138</b>			
	<b>8</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>10</b>			<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>9</b>		