

The Birds of Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath 2013



Goldcrest at Ladies' Mile (DW)

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This year will surely be remembered for the prolonged cold spell at its beginning. Lasting well into April, it resulted in many of our summer visitors delaying migration until much later than usual, in the case of the Chiffchaff for example, twenty four days later than in 2012. Furthermore, on arriving many found the Common still very much wearing its wintry attire, with its vegetation affording little or no cover, the consequence being that instead of establishing territories as normal, the earlier arrivals appeared to have continued moving further north. Perhaps unsurprisingly this was reflected in a drastic drop in the numbers of warblers breeding with us this year. The prevailing conditions also had an adverse affect on some of our resident breeders, most noticeably the Long-tailed Tit, a bird which can often be found nest-building in late January and February but which this year delayed this undertaking until the first week in April.

With our ponds full to overflowing in the spring, it promised to be a good year for our waterfowl, and to some extent this proved to be the case, the Moorhen being particularly successful, with a pair even breeding at the diminutive Curling Pond. Elsewhere the Mute Swans bred at Queensmere for the fifth time in the last seven years, and the Tufted Duck enjoyed its best year since 2005 when at least three pairs were found with ducklings. But by far our most productive pond was Bluegate GP where a very impressive seven species bred – all of which were observed with young. However, as so often happens at our plateau ponds, the heat wave during July saw water levels become dangerously shallow, leaving many juvenile birds exposed to predation by dogs or Grey Herons. One can only hope that the majority left the pond safely.



With the exception of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, which now appears to be lost as a breeding bird, and, for reasons explained earlier, a reduction in the number of our two visiting woodland warblers, the Chiffchaff and Blackcap, on the whole our woodland and scrubland species continue to do well, in particular the Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Stock Dove, and at least one pair of Hobbies bred successfully again this year. On the downside, there were no records received of the Bullfinch or Linnet, and several species only made the list by virtue of single observations,

As in 2011, it is disappointing to have to report that it proved to be another blank year for ground-nesting birds. Much effort was once again aimed at attracting the Skylark back to the Meadow during the relevant months but unfortunately to no avail. One probability being that this bird's basic requirements involve a much greater area of adequate ground cover in which to nest than that presented. Elsewhere much endeavour continues to be expended on the clearing of birch scrub on the plateau, particularly in the Ladies Mile area, where, it has to be said, the heathland is looking as lush and inviting as ever, and yet still remains noticeably sterile when it comes to attracting bird life. It is difficult these days to believe that during the 1980s six of the Common's seven ground-nesting birds bred in this area. Certainly one of problems in this respect, compared with then, is the number of visitors who forsake the pathways to walk through these sensitive areas. With no controls in place to alleviate this particular problem, such as signage, it seems unlikely that we will ever again experience the comparatively low levels of disturbance that existed a few decades ago. Creating suitable habitat is one thing, protecting it is quite another – each being futile without the other. National declines accepted, it surely cannot be entirely coincidental that the

majority of those birds nesting in our trees or in dense scrub are thriving, while those using ground cover have disappeared. Furthermore, if there is no balance, then the ongoing struggle between the freedom of visitors to enjoy recreational pursuits on the Common and that of its ground-nesting birds can only result in the continued depletion of the latter –a scenario that is slowly but surely already being played out at several of our ponds, in which there are often as many dogs as waterfowl these days. However, as indicated earlier, the problem of dogs in our ponds is very much one of low water levels whereupon it becomes far easier for certain breeds to chase down flightless young birds; dogs in deeper water are relatively harmless and indeed become more vulnerable themselves at the hands of our larger water birds such as the Mute Swan. Dare we hope that the dredging of our plateau ponds be given some long-awaited priority in the near future, in particular Bluegate GP which has now failed to maintain adequate water levels throughout the summer since 2001?

One cannot help but recall the words of environmentalist David Bellamy who back in 2000 warned that the greatest danger facing the Common is that it becomes ‘loved to death’. –the inference being of course that its increasing magnetism eventually becomes the instrument of its decreasing flora and fauna. Whilst one appreciates and indeed lauds the conservation measures and hard work of both staff and conservators in this respect, disturbance on the Common in the future is likely to remain unrelenting, so too the challenges, not least of which being the avoidance of becoming too easily resigned to the consequences of its popularity.

There were 96 species recorded during the year, 46 of which bred or probably bred. This total is slightly down compared with the previous few years, but so too, significantly, was the amount of coverage, with one or two key contributors absent during the breeding months, including yours truly. Taking this into consideration, it is actually a good number and one that is well above the yearly average overall. Moreover, there was a slight improvement in the number of species that bred or probably bred. Some of the more interesting observations included Little Egret, Red Kite, Jack Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Cuckoo, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Whinchat, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Brambling and Common Crossbill.

As ever, many thanks are extended to all contributors to this report, a full list of which may be found below. Special thanks are extended to Gay Carr for checking and advising on its content, and to Peter Haldane and his colleagues at the Windmill for collecting and forwarding records from the public, as well as passing on their own observations.

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Chaffinch

David Wills
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at the
 Causeway Scrub



DETAILS OF BIRDS RECORDED ON WIMBLEDON COMMON & PUTNEY HEATH 2013

Observers' initials are shown against records where appropriate – mo (for many observers). All references to first-time breeders or to new additions to the Common's list of species relate only to recent history: 1974 to 2013.

Species

Mute Swan **1 breeding pair**

Status: prior to 2007, an irregular visitor to the Common's ponds, but has since bred at Queensmere in five of the past seven years

Eight recently-hatched cygnets were noted on the water at Queensmere on 21 May, but unfortunately, due to a series of mishaps, this number had dwindled to just four by late Sept. – one of the casualties, having seemingly been shot in the head and neck with pellets, was taken to a Swan Sanctuary where it eventually made a full recovery. Unusually, the surviving four cygnets remained at the pond until the year's end (mo).

Greylag Goose

Status: bred at Kingsmere in each year from 2000 to 2005, but has since become an infrequent visitor.

All records this year fell between mid Feb. and the end of May, with small numbers occasionally present at Rushmere, Bluegate GP and on the flooded Meadow (TS, KV, DW, SRS).

Canada Goose **2 breeding pairs**

Status: breeding resident.

There appears to have been a marked decline in the number of Canada Geese breeding on the Common in recent years, and indeed in the numbers of those visiting our ponds outside of the breeding months. Whether or not this trend is peculiar to the Common remains to be seen. No doubt the swans at Queensmere account for their absence there, and it could well be that the number of dogs in the water at Kingsmere these days may also act as a deterrent at that pond. However, two pairs did breed, one at Kingsmere and the other at Bluegate GP, producing three and four goslings respectively (GC, DW).

Egyptian Goose

Status: a regular non-breeding feral visitor.

Present at various times of the year, usually in small numbers and predominately at Rushmere where a maximum of four were present on 5 Jan. (mo).

Mandarin Duck **at least one pair bred**

Status: feral breeding resident, usually one or two pairs.

Bred in the vicinity Beverley Brook where ducks with young were observed on 12 Aug. and 8 Sept. (MD, DW). In addition, non-breeding birds and juveniles were particularly conspicuous this year at many of our ponds, with up to 14 present at Kingsmere on several dates in Jan. and Feb. (GC, JWr), and the same number present at Queensmere on 14 Oct. (GC).

Gadwall

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, noticeably scarcer in recent years.

Pairs, or possibly the same pair, were present at Bluegate GP on 20 April and at Hookhamslade on the 4th and 9th of May (DW, MA).



Species

Eurasian Teal

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

All records are given: one at Kingsmere on 1 Jan. (JWr), and single birds present at Queensmere on three dates in Oct. (DW).

Mallard

Status: breeding resident with numbers increasing during the autumn and winter.

Birds with recently hatched ducklings were noted at Bluegate GP on 27 May and 29 June; at 7 Post Pond on 28 June; Queensmere on 11 July and Kingsmere on 18 July. The year's highest count came from Queensmere with 57 present on 16 Nov. (GC, MG, DW).

Northern Shoveler

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were just two records during the first-winter period involving two birds at both Kingsmere and Queensmere on 17 Jan. Later in the year small numbers were present at both ponds, with a maximum of ten at Kingsmere on 23 Dec. (GC, DW).



Common Pochard

1 pair bred

Status: normally a winter visitor and passage migrant with a preference for Queensmere, but a pair bred at Bluegate GP this year, thus becoming the first to do so since records began in 1974.

Following frequent sightings of a pair at Bluegate GP in May, a duck with ducklings was eventually observed on 24 June. Elsewhere, birds were present in varying, but modest, numbers at both Queensmere and Kingsmere during the winter/spring months, with a maximum of six at Queensmere on 13 April (GC, DW).

Tufted Duck

3 pairs bred

Status: breeding resident (since 2000), winter visitor and passage migrant.

This has been a much better year for this familiar diving duck, with single pairs breeding successfully at Kingsmere, Scio Pond and Bluegate GP. Elsewhere the highest count of the year came from Queensmere where c30 were present on several dates towards the end of the year (GC, MG, DW).).

Pheasant

Status: scarce visitor.

The only observation received during the year came from Putney Heath where two birds were found near Telegraph Cottage on 20 March (PH).

Little Grebe

Status: chiefly a passage, but an occasional breeder, water levels at our ponds allowing.

A pair bred successfully on the Common for the first time since 2001, being first noted at Bluegate GP in late April. By 25 June three youngsters were seen, being last observed on 13 July, by which time the pond's water levels had fallen dangerously low. The presumption, and the hope, is that they left the pond safely.



Little Grebe at Bluegate GP

Species

Cormorant

Status: a regular visitor to our larger ponds, primarily in the winter months.

The best count this year came at Queensmere where eight birds were present on 1 Jan. (mo).

Little Egret

Status: scarce visitor, increasingly observed flying over in recent years.

There were three observations this year: one flew NW over Warren Farm on 13 Feb. (SRS), one was at Kingsmere on 26 April (JWr) and three at Beverley Brook near Brook Cottage on 13 Dec. (SRS).

Grey Heron

Status: regular non-breeding visitor.

Birds were observed at most of the Common's ponds and Beverley Brook throughout the year, with maxima of three being attracted to the low water levels at Bluegate GP on several occasions in July and August (mo).

Red Kite

Status: scarce passage migrant, exclusively observed flying over.

All records are given: one SW over Springwell on 4 Feb. (BC), one above Caesars Well on 26 April (JG), one above Fishponds Wood on 1 May (SRS) and one south over Fishponds Wood on 2 June (SRS).

Sparrowhawk

at least two pairs bred (conservative)

Status: breeding resident.

Due to poor coverage during the relevant months, no nests were located this year. However, recently-fledged young were heard calling at two sites: Parkside at its junction with Inner Park Ride on 1 Aug. and at the Reservoir Wood on Putney Heath on 9 Aug. (DW).



Common Buzzard

Status: regular migrant and visitor in recent years.

There were 19 observations reported during the year, eleven of which were of birds in or above the area lying between the Acropolis and Beverley Meads, including a pair displaying there on 26 April, and a grounded bird near Kingsmere on 16 Nov., but any evidence of breeding remains elusive (TG, PP, AP, CT, DW, PJ, PD, GG, MC, SRS)

Kestrel

c5 territories

Status: breeding resident.

There were no nests located this year, but juveniles were noted in three areas during Aug. and Sept. (DW, SRS).

Hobby

1 pair bred

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Pairs were located in three areas of the Common this year, although a pair heard at Stag Bog in May could not be found subsequently. However a pair was successful in producing two juveniles in the Parkside area, both of which remained with us until 9 Oct. The third pair proved to be something of an enigma: having arrived at Putney Heath in early May to find that the nest used in the previous two years had disintegrated, they nevertheless remained vocal at the locality until 22 Aug, but there was no evidence of a nest nor indeed were there any juveniles seen or heard – possibly a non-breeding or unsuccessful pair (DG, AP, DW, CB).

Species

Peregrine Falcon

Status: scarce airborne visitor.

All records are given: one west on 9 March (PS); one NE over the Mounds on 13 March (JW) and one over Rushmere on 27 March (AP).

Moorhen

15 breeding pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Pairs with broods are as follows: Beverley Brook (4), Kingsmere (2), Bluegate GP (2), Queensmere (1), Fishponds (1), Scio Pond (1), 7 Post Pond (1), Hookhamslade (1), Curling Pond (1) and Ravine Pond (1) (GC, DW).

Coot

7 breeding pairs

Status: breeding resident.

The numbers of breeding pairs during the year were as follows: Queensmere (3); Kingsmere (2) and Bluegate GP (2) (GC, DW).

Northern Lapwing

Status: scarce visitor, most likely to be seen flying over.

A flock of about ten seen at Rushmere on 10 Jan. were the first grounded birds recorded on the Common for many years (JR). Elsewhere, one was observed briefly displaying on the Meadow on 25 May (JWr).

Jack Snipe

Status: scarce passage migrant.

All records are given: single birds present on the Meadow on the 7th, 8th, 14th Jan. and on 14 April (DW).

Common Snipe

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, can be numerous following wet spells of weather.

With much of the plateau flooded during the first few months of the year, conditions were ideal for this shy wader, resulting in 27 records involving 79 birds, with a maximum on nine on 14 March (AP, DW, JW).

Woodcock

Status: regular passage migrant and winter visitor - can be elusive.

There were 16 records of single birds during the year, with 12 observations falling between 22 Jan and 17 April in the first winter period and four later in the year during Nov. (AH, PP, JA, MC, DW).

Green Sandpiper

Status: scarce passage migrant.

One at Bluegate GP on 26 June was the first record of this infrequent visitor since 2003 (DW).



Cuckoo's egg in Dunnocks' nest
at the site of Brickfield Cottage

Memory Corner 1977



Young Skylarks on the Meadow

Species

Black-headed Gull

Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The best count of the year was of 700+ birds on the western playing fields on 1 Jan.; also worthy of note was an estimated c200 at Rushmere on 27 Jan. (mo).

Common Gull

Status: fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Often present at Rushmere and on the western playing fields during the winter months, with a maximum of c300 at the latter on 1 Jan. (mo).

Lesser Blacked-backed Gull

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Records of grounded birds this year came from the Meadow, Bluegate GP, Rushmere and the western playing fields, with a maximum of four on the playing fields on 16 July (DG, DW, MG, SRS).

Herring Gull

Status: uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly seen flying over.

All records of grounded birds are as follows: three juveniles were on the flooded Meadow on 27 Jan. and one there on 15 Feb. (DW). Elsewhere single birds were noted on the western playing fields on 16 to 18 July and at Kingsmere on 20 Dec. (SRS, DW).

Great Blacked-backed Gull

Status: rare winter visitor and passage migrant, occasionally observed flying over.



Common Tern

Common Tern

Status: non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

One can only speculate as to why this elegant visitor has become something of a rarity in recent years. It could be that fish stocks at our ponds have diminished, or that those at its breeding waters have now become sufficient. One at Rushmere on 29 May was the only record this year (DW)

Rock Dove

Status: fairly common feral resident, confined chiefly in the Common's perimeter.

As in previous years, a few pairs bred underneath the A3 Beverley Bridge at Beverley Brook.

Stock Dove

c25 territories

Status: breeding resident.

This unobtrusive dove has now become firmly established as a fairly common breeding bird in our woodland areas, particularly those lying between the Acropolis and Beverley Meads. The only flocks of note were 11 birds on the western playing fields on 16 June and 14 there on 16 Nov. (DW, SRS, MG).

Woodpigeon

Status: common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Some huge influxes and movements were reported in late October, with an estimated seven to eight thousand travelling SW over the Common on the 30th (JWr).

Species**Collared Dove****4 territories***Status: scarce breeding resident.*

There were signs this year that this elegant dove may have extended its range on the Common, for in addition to its being regularly seen and heard in formerly used areas, such as the Beverley Meads car park and at West Side, pairs were also seen and noted singing on several occasions: along Stag Ride, near Queensmere and the allotments, and at Parkside near Bluegate GP, with one also reported in the Burning Dump area in May (SRS, MG, DW).

Ring-necked Parakeet**c25 pairs***Status: naturalized breeding resident.*

Having bred on the Common for the first time as late as 2006, this vociferous parakeet is now firmly established and probably still increasing. A flock of 56 flew over the Meadow on 7 Sept. (mo).

Common Cuckoo*Status: passage migrant, has become increasingly scarce in recent years.*

There were just two records this year, possibly of the same bird on 21 April (TG, HF).

Tawny Owl**at least 5 pairs present***Status: breeding resident.*

There was no positive evidence of breeding discovered during the year, but adults were found roosting or heard calling in the following areas: Beverley Meads, Triangle Wood, Queensmere, Clockhouse Wood, Exeter House Wood, Thatched Cottage and Farm Ravine (SRS, SS, TG, GC, AE).

Common Swift*Status: regular summer visitor, appearing to breed outside of the Common's perimeter.*

The first observation of the year came at Rushmere on 6 May (KV). Thereafter, birds remained numerous during June and much of July, with c50 over the Meadow on 16 June being the year's best count (AP). A solitary bird over Ladies Mile on 3 Aug. was the last to be reported (DW).

Kingfisher*Status: an occasional non-breeding visitor to our ponds and Beverley Brook.*

All records are given: single birds seen along Beverley Brook on 16 Jan. (PP) and 22 May (CT); at Queensmere on 28 Aug. and 6 Sept. (DW) and at Scio Pond on 16 Oct. (DH).



Tawny Owl near Queensmere

Green Woodpecker**c20 pairs***Status: breeding resident.*

Only one nesting hole was located this year, producing at least three young which fledged successfully in late June (DW).

Great Spotted Woodpecker**c50 pairs***Status: breeding resident.*

This familiar woodpecker continues to prosper on the Common, with a total of 16 nesting holes being discovered during limited coverage of woodland areas, a figure which probably accounts for about a third of the true breeding population (GC, DW).

Species

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Status: scarce visitor in recent years.

The only record of the year was that of a male drumming and calling in the Clockhouse Wood from 18 to 24 April, which alas could not be found subsequently (DW). A late record of one in July of 2012 took last year's total number of species up to 103 (JB).

Skylark

Status: passage migrant, having last bred in 2007.

There were nine records involving 12 birds during the year, all of which unfortunately proved to be migrants (AP, PG, DW).

Sand Martin

Status: scarce passage migrant.

Three flying south on 8 Sept. was the only record of the year (MD).



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Swallow

Status: regular passage migrant.

Migrating birds were few and far between this year, with small parties being noted from 10 April to 9 May in the spring and from 10 Sept. to 15 Sept. in the autumn (AP, MW, DW).

House Martin

Status: currently a scarce passage migrant, much declined in recent years - last bred in 2004.

This has been yet another disastrous year for this once regular summer visitor to the Common. There were just three records: one at Rushmere on 12 April (KV), six above Rushmere on 19 May and c10 above the Meadow on 17 Sept. (DW).

Tree Pipit

Status: scarce passage migrant, formerly bred but not since 1990.

The only observation this year was of one on the Meadow on 14 Sept. (DW).

Meadow Pipit

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly bred but not since 2003.

Present from the beginning of the year until 25 April with a maximum of 23 on 19 March, and from 10 Sept. until the end of the year, with c30 present on 13 Sept. (mo).

Grey Wagtail

1 pair bred

Status: scarce breeding resident and passage migrant.

Birds were frequently encountered along Beverley Brook during the year and at many of our ponds during the autumn/winter periods. In addition, a pair was observed feeding fledged juveniles under the A3 Beverley Bridge on 8 Sept. (MC, GC, DW).



Meadow Pipit

Pied Wagtail

Status: irregular breeding resident and winter visitor.

Adults with juveniles were frequently seen at Rushmere later in the year, but, as in previous years, are thought to have actually nested beyond the Common's perimeter.

Species

Wren

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Dunnock

Status: common breeding resident.

Robin

Status: abundant breeding resident.

Whinchat

Status: regular passage migrant, occurring mainly in the autumn.

There were no spring sightings this year, but a good total of 18 birds were observed between 19 Aug. and 15 Sept. during autumn migration, mainly on the Meadow, with maxima of three on two dates (MD, DW).



European Stonechat

Status: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

A rather poor year this, with just three observations, all occurring on the Meadow: one on 5 March, one on 5 May and one on 6 Oct. (DW).

Northern Wheatear

Status: regular passage migrant.

Observed at intervals on the Meadow from 13 April to 26 April, involving 23 birds with a maximum of four on 24 April (AP, DW) - unusually, there were no May sightings this year. Later in the year there were just three sightings of single birds, again on the Meadow, on 27 Aug., 29 Aug. and 2 Sept. (DW).

Blackbird

Status: common breeding resident.

Not a bird usually associated with flocking, thus ten counted in a hawthorn on the Large Mound on 15 Oct. was an interesting observation (DW).

Fieldfare

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in some years.

This is a bird that often arrives with the snow, and this year was no exception, with good numbers present from mid Jan. to the first week in April, the maximum being c100 on the western playing fields on 12 Feb. (CT, MD, JW, GC, AP, DW). Birds were few and far between during the second winter period with five on the Large Mound proving the best count.



Song Thrush

at least 40 pairs

Status: breeding resident.

Remains a fairly common breeding bird, but in line with other local sites has probably declined somewhat since last being estimated in 1999 when c60 territories were estimated.

Fieldfare

Species

Redwing

Status: regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

Present in good numbers from the beginning of the year until 13 April, with at least two flocks exceeding a hundred birds on the 7 and 11 of April. Later in the year the first returning birds involved several large movements, comprising an estimated at 300+, heading west on 10 Oct., after which birds were reported as being generally well distributed but localised throughout the Common (JW, DW, MD, GC, JW, PP).

Mistle Thrush

c20 territories

Status: breeding resident.

This hardy thrush was another of our breeding residents to brave the elements earlier in the year, with a pair seen feeding fledged juvenile in the Clockhouse Wood on 21 April (DW).



Mistle Thrush in the western woods

Reed Warbler

Status: scarce passage migrant.

There were two records this year, both involving singing birds: one in scrub at Beverley Meads on 11 June (SRS) and one in bramble towards the west end of Queensmere on 25 June (DW).

Blackcap

c80 territories

Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.

The first record of a singing bird this year came from the Clockhouse Wood on 13 April –some 21 days later than in 2012. Furthermore, as a result of the extended cold spell at the beginning of the year and in line with other of our visiting warblers, the number of breeding pairs also fell, but not as drastically.

Garden Warbler

16 territories

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first observation this year came from the Causeway Scrub where a bird was found singing on 2 May. As with all our visiting warblers, fewer pairs bred with us during the year, 16 compared with 21 in 2012. (SRS, DW).

Lesser Whitethroat

Status: a passage migrant in recent years, formerly more numerous, but has not bred since 2002.

There were just two records this year: one at the south-corner of the Meadow on 6 May and one at the Triangle scrub on 12 Sept. (MD).

Common Whitethroat

23 territories

Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Of all our visiting warblers the Common Whitethroat undoubtedly suffered the greatest reduction in breeding numbers during the year, with just 23 territories being established compared to 42 in 2012. The first arrival was noted on 21 April, the last on being on 1 Oct (AP, DW).

Chiffchaff

c40 territories

Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.

The first singing bird of the year was heard near the Richardson Evans War Memorial on 6 April (AS) -some 24 days later than last year. Furthermore, in line with our other visiting warblers, there were noticeably far fewer territories established: nearer c40 compared with c60 in recent years (DW).

Species

Willow Warbler

Status: formerly a common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant - much declined over the last two decades.

As in 2011, this was unfortunately another blank year when it came to breeding birds (two pairs in 2012). The first arrivals this year were noted on 15 April, followed by just one or two singing birds up until 4 May. In fact the dearth of singing birds in the spring was compounded by the fact that there were equally as many singing birds recorded later in the year on their return journey. The last record of the year was of an immature bird on the Large Mound on 7 Oct. (DW).

Goldcrest **at least 31 territories**

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The breeding population of this tiny warbler appears to be stable, with 31 singing birds being mapped this year during partial coverage of the Common's woodland (33 in 2012).



Firecrest

Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

All records are given: one in the Triangle Wood on 17 Jan. and 14 March; one near Brook Cottage on 24 Jan. (DW); one at the North View clearing on 1 Feb. (MW); one south of Queensmere on 2 Feb. (DW); one at Stag Ride on 7 Feb. (PC); one at the southern end of Beverley Brook on 19 Feb. (DW); one at Stag Ride north of Queensmere on 23 Feb. (MD) and one near Wildcroft Manor on 7 Nov. (DW).

Spotted Flycatcher

Status: passage migrant, becoming scarcer.

One in a mixed flock at Ladies Mile on 23 Sept. was the only record received this year (DW).

Long-tailed Tit **c60 breeding pairs**

Status: common breeding resident.

These delicate little birds continue to do well on the Common, although it was noticeable that birds commenced building their elaborate nests much later this year than in 2012, -due again to the sustained cold spell during the spring. Elsewhere, the best count of the year came from the Parkside woods on 26 Aug, where some 70 birds were counted amongst a mixed flock (DW).

Blue Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Great Tit

Status: common breeding resident.

Coal Tit **c45 territories**

Status: breeding resident.



Nuthatch **at least 23 territories**

Status: breeding resident.

Often heard rather than seen, the breeding population of this small woodland bird appears to be stable, with 23 territories being mapped during limited coverage of the Common's woodland – 22 in 2012 (DW).

Species

Treecreeper

at least 27 territories

Status: breeding resident.

Though elusive, this inconspicuous little bird is another that remains a fairly common breeder in our woodlands. There were 27 territories counted during limited coverage, - a total which almost certainly errs on the side of caution (DW, BC, GC, MD).

Jay

Status: breeding resident.

Magpie

Status: breeding resident.

The Magpie remains one of our most abundant breeding corvids, with one bird noted nest building in blackthorn at the Causeway Scrub on several dates in late Oct.; one can only surmise that this particular bird was either fooled by the mild temperatures or simply intent on being well prepared.



Treecreeper

Jackdaw

Status: common resident and occasional breeder.

Unfortunately, owing to adjacent roof work, the pair that usually nests in a chimney-stack at North View was deterred from doing so this year. Elsewhere, some of the larger overflying flocks are given: 200 SE over Beverley Brook on 15 Jan. and 16 Dec.; 350 SW over Beverley Meads on 15 Feb. and 450 NW over the same area on 29 Sept. (SRS).

Carrion Crow

Status: breeding resident.

Given the severely cold weather at the beginning of the year, one has to admire the hardiness of these birds, with several being observed sitting on exposed nests during freezing winds on 30 March.

Starling

Status: breeding resident.

Particularly prevalent in the Rushmere area and at the Windmill complex, with one or two pairs breeding in nest boxes at the latter, but generally much declined in recent years.

House Sparrow

c14 pairs

Status: scarce breeding resident.

Despite one bird being heard happily chirping away at the Windmill café on 6 April, there were sadly no further observations from this once favoured haunt. Elsewhere, the small colonies on the Common's perimeter at The Green, Wimbledon; Vale Crescent and Beverley Lane appear stable.



Jay

Chaffinch

c35 territories

Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

For the first time since 1995, the number of Chaffinch territories was counted this year, and showed a slight, but probably insignificant, drop over the period from 41 down to 35.

Species

Brambling

Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A rather disappointing year for observations of this attractive finch, with one or two birds heard in a mixed flock at the Large Mound on 31 Oct. being the only record (DW).

Greenfinch

c20 territories

Status: breeding resident.

Goldfinch

Status: scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

A few pairs are thought to have bred, with birds noted singing at several sites in May and June. Elsewhere several flocks were reported from the Large Mound during the winter months, with a maximum of c40 on 29 Oct (mo).

Siskin

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were numerous records involving moderate flocks during the first winter period, with a maximum of c30 in alders at Queensmere on 11 Feb. (CT). By contrast, there was something of a dearth at the other end of the year with just two records of single birds (GC, DW, AP, AH).



Greenfinch

Lesser Redpoll

Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.

In line with some of our other visiting winter finches, observations of the Lesser Redpoll were few and far between this year, with most involving single birds, the exceptions being a group of five on the Large Mound on 6 Nov., ten at Fishponds Wood on 14 Dec., eight near the Ravine Pond on 19 Dec. and c20 at Beverley Meads on 18 Dec. (AP, MG, GG, DW, SRS).

Common Crossbill

Status: scarce visitor.

There were two records during the year: one over Parkside on 22 July (DMH per LBC) and two calling over the Causeway Scrub on 8 Aug. (DW).

Reed Bunting

Status: passage migrant and winter visitor- last bred in 2006.

Despite a singing bird being noted on the Meadow and at Bluegate GP in the spring, there was no subsequent evidence of breeding having occurred this year. However, wintering birds were present in good numbers, particularly at the beginning of the year, with a maximum of 16 at Ladies Mile on 22 Jan. (DW).

Total Species	96	(103 in 2012)
Bred or probably bred	46	(44 in 2012)

Barn Owl

A very tame bird perched on one of the benches surprised visitors to Kingsmere on 28th April. It transpired that it had escaped from a collection at London Zoo two weeks earlier! (PH).

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS RECORDED ON THE COMMON/HEATH DURING 2013

* -Indicates bred or probably bred

f -Species observed only flying over

Mute Swan*	Herring Gull	Redwing
Greylag Goose	Great Black-backed Gull <i>f</i>	Mistle Thrush*
Canada Goose*	Common Tern	Reed Warbler
Egyptian Goose	Rock Dove*	Lesser Whitethroat
Mandarin Duck*	Stock Dove*	Common Whitethroat*
Gadwall	Woodpigeon*	Garden Warbler*
Common Teal	Collared Dove*	Blackcap*
Mallard*	Ring-necked Parakeet*	Common Chiffchaff*
Shoveler	Cuckoo	Willow Warbler
Common Pochard*	Tawny Owl*	Goldcrest*
Tufted Duck*	Common Swift	Firecrest
Pheasant	Kingfisher	Spotted Flycatcher
Little Grebe*	Green Woodpecker*	Long-tailed Tit*
Cormorant	Great Spotted Woodpecker*	Blue Tit*
Little Egret	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Great Tit*
Grey Heron	Skylark	Coal Tit*
Red Kite <i>f</i>	Sand Martin <i>f</i>	Nuthatch*
Sparrowhawk*	Swallow	Treecreeper*
Common Buzzard	House Martin	Jay*
Kestrel*	Tree Pipit	Magpie*
Hobby*	Meadow Pipit	Jackdaw*
Peregrine Falcon <i>f</i>	Grey Wagtail	Carrion Crow*
Moorhen*	Pied Wagtail	Starling*
Coot*	Wren*	House Sparrow*
Northern Lapwing <i>f</i>	Dunnock*	Chaffinch*
Common Snipe	Robin*	Brambling
Jack Snipe	Whinchat	Greenfinch*
Woodcock	European Stonechat	Goldfinch*
Green Sandpiper	Northern Wheatear	Siskin
Black-headed Gull	Blackbird*	Lesser Redpoll
Common Gull	Fieldfare	Common Crossbill
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Song Thrush*	Reed Bunting

Additions compared with the 2012 list are Jack Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Reed Warbler and Common Crossbill. Absentees were Honey Buzzard, Little Owl, Short-eared Owl, Yellow Wagtail, Waxwing, Nightingale, Ring Ouzel, Sedge Warbler, Marsh Tit, Bullfinch and Linnet.



Pochard
duckling

Bluegate GP

The following list shows the number of species recorded each year on the Common/Heath since 1974, and the number of them that bred or probably bred. However, it should be emphasised that the total recorded in any given year reflects the amount of coverage during that year rather any significant changes in the number of species occurring.

Year	Species	B or pb
1974	86	51
1975	86	49
1976	86	48
1977	82	49
1978	88	51
1979	84	50
1980	83	50
1981	77	45
1982	82	49
1983	82	50
1984	83	49
1985	90	51
1986	89	49
1987	88	51
1988	86	49
1989	78	48
1990	74	48
1991	71	45
1992	68	45
1993	74	41
1994	77	42
1995	89	42
1996	77	41
1997	85	39
1998	87	45
1999	87	44
2000	81	47
2001	96	48
2002	91	46
2003	96	50
2004	92	48
2005	95	48
2006	95	49
2007	99	49
2008	91	47
2009	96	46
2010	102	44
2011	104	43
2012	103	44
2013	96	46

Yearly averages: Species 86, B or pb 47
The total number of species over the whole period stands at 147, thirteen of which were recorded flying over.

Coordinators of bird records since 1974

E. D. McMillan	1974-1982
D. L. Wills	1983-1990
R. H. Kettle	1991-1997
D. L. Wills	1998-2013

* * * * *

Estimated breeding territories of selected species during 2013

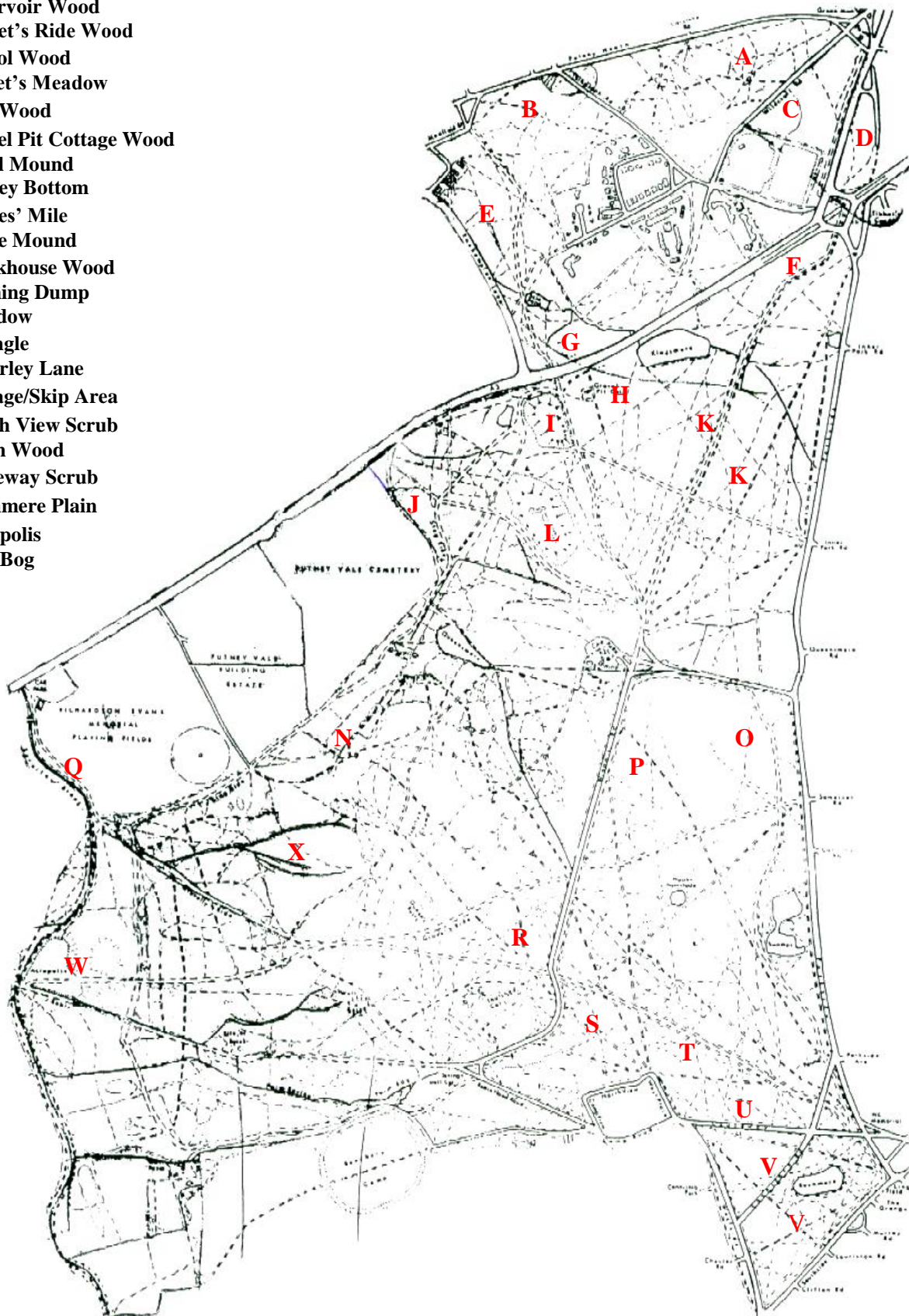
	2013	2012
Canada Goose	2	3
Mandarin Duck	1	1
Tufted Duck	3	1
Hobby	1	2
Moorhen	15	9
Coot	6	5
Grey Wagtail	1	1
Common Whitethroat	23	42
Garden Warbler	16	21
Willow Warbler	0	2



Common Whitethroat

A GUIDE TO FORMER, OR IMPROVISED, PLACE NAMES USED IN THIS REPORT

- A** Exeter House Wood
- B** Church Wood
- C** Reservoir Wood
- D** Tibbet's Ride Wood
- E** School Wood
- F** Tibbet's Meadow
- G** Scio Wood
- H** Gravel Pit Cottage Wood
- I** Small Mound
- J** Putney Bottom
- K** Ladies' Mile
- L** Large Mound
- M** Clockhouse Wood
- N** Burning Dump
- O** Meadow
- P** Triangle
- Q** Beverley Lane
- R** Storage/Skip Area
- S** North View Scrub
- T** South Wood
- U** Causeway Scrub
- V** Rushmere Plain
- W** Acropolis
- X** Stag Bog





Green Woodpecker at Jerry's Hill (DW)