



The weatherman has promised me a lovely day but, at the moment, there is mist hanging over the garden. The cobwebs are absolutely beautiful with all sorts of different shapes draped over the bushes. Most of the regular birds to the bird table are still coming despite the wonderful harvest in the hedgerow. The only two species I have not seen in the last few weeks are Blackbirds and Great-spotted Woodpeckers. One of the recent emails I had in from the BTO explained why Blackbirds were not around, as they are moulting and cannot fly well, but I have seen a couple in the garden recently so perhaps their moult is almost complete. I still hear the woodpeckers when I am out in the garden so they obviously have got enough natural foods around at the moment. Certainly the hedgerows are looking fantastic with lots of berries around. A very real contrast from this time last year. It will be really interesting to see how that affects the reports of bird sightings during the winter months.

As well as all the cobwebs you really feel that migration is in full swing. The last couple of evenings it has been warm enough to sit outside as dusk has approached and on both evenings House Martins have been flying over in flocks moving gradually in a southerly direction. Normally we only see about four or five martins at a time over the house but this time the flocks have been over 25 on each occasion. I have recorded the sightings into BirdTrack as I know the information is important in charting how the autumn migration is taking place. If you do not yet enter your sightings into BirdTrack please do have a go. It is very easy and, even better, it is easy looking up your results and seeing where you have seen any species. The link to the BirdTrack part of the website is <http://blx1.bto.org/birdtrack/main/data-home.jsp>

The Summer Surveys

The one off survey which took place this summer was the Woodcock survey. Thank you so much to all of you who took part. I am still waiting for a few results to be entered and, when those have gone in, I will be analysing the results for Surrey. I will let you have them in my next newsletter which will come out in the spring.

The other main summer surveys are the ones which take

place every year namely the Breeding Bird survey (BBS) and the Waterways Breeding Bird survey (WBBS). All of my WBBS sites are covered but I do still have some BBS sites which have not been covered (some ever) and some of my surveyors have been telling me that they will not be able to cover their sites from 2014 onwards. In addition, a couple of sites in Berkshire which were in the SU96 square for which I am responsible, are coming back under my responsibility from Berkshire. I am therefore listing below the sites which will be available next year. I know it seems a long way off but, if you are interested in becoming involved, why not look at the list. I can let you have a map showing the route taken in the square (if it has been covered in the past) and you could explore it during the winter and then decide whether or not you would like to take it on. Even better, you could carry out the Winter Thrushes survey at the same time (please see below).

The vacant sites (for next year) are:

10km	BBS Name	BBS Grid Ref
SU93	South of Chiddingfold	SU9534
SU94	Elstead	SU9043
SU94	South of Wanborough Common	SU9446
SU95	Frimley Ridge	SU9059
SU95	Fairlands (W of Guildford)	SU9651
SU95	Knaphill	SU9658
SU95	North-east of Fox Corner	SU9755
SU96	South Ascot	SU9267
TQ03	Oxoncroft Copse (on Sussex Border footpath)	TQ0232
TQ03	Cranleigh	TQ0539
TQ03	Massers Wood (S of Cranleigh)	TQ0735
TQ03	SE of Cranleigh	TQ0837
TQ03	The Windbreak (S of Ewhurst)	TQ0937
TQ04	East of Winkworth Arboretum	TQ0041
TQ04	Palmers Cross (S of Wonersh)	TQ0240
TQ04	Rooks Hill (SW of Shamley Green)	TQ0242
TQ05	Woking	TQ0059
TQ05	North of West Clandon	TQ0453
TQ05	North of Ripley	TQ0557
TQ05	East Clandon	TQ0751
TQ06	Chertsey Meads	TQ0566
TQ16	Epsom	TQ1961
TQ25	Gatton	TQ2753
TQ25	N of M25 & N of Merstham	TQ2854
TQ25	South Merstham	TQ2952
TQ25	M23 SE of Chaldon	TQ2954
TQ35	North west of Oxted	TQ3752

I will be keeping this list updated on my website at www.surreybtorep.co.uk so please check that list because it may be that I will have to add some more sites if anyone else decides that they can no longer cover their site.

And of course a big thank you to all my BBS and WBBS surveyors. I have all my WBBS results in (which is a paper based survey only) but can see that there are still some BBS results to be entered. So, if you are one of those who has carried out the survey but have not got your results in yet, please could you do so as soon as possible so that Kate Risely can start analysing the results.

The Winter Surveys

The survey which runs every winter (although you can continue to cover it during the summer months as well if you wish) is the Wetland Bird survey. The main survey period is September through to March. Although I have managed to recruit quite a few new surveyors (and thank you very much to all of those who have become involved) quite often it seems that the site being surveyed is a new site rather than one of the ones on my list. The list is still very long and includes a lot of sites around the Thames. I set out below a list of the current vacant sites and, if you would like to get involved, please do let me know. Also, if you are aware of a site which no longer exists or is not accessible, it would be really helpful being told this. Again my website has the completely up to date list of vacant sites on it. I also have on my website a list of the sites which are covered. If you are aware of a waterbody, which can be a river, lake or pond which is not on either list and which can be accessed, please do let me know. It would be even better if you were able to offer to cover it as well!

The current list of vacant sites is:

10K	Unit	Unit Code	Grid Ref
SU83	Shottermill Ponds	23015	SU881334
SU85	Mytchett Gravel Pit	23222	SU885546
SU85	Tomlin's Pond	23006	SU887586
SU86	Rapley Lakes	23005	SU898646
SU86	RMA Lakes	23008	SU862606
SU93	Thursley Lake	23045	SU921392
SU94	Broadford Pond	23042	SU996470
SU94	River Wey - Lammas Lands	23325	SU971442
SU94	Shalford Water Meadows	23327	SU996476
SU94	Thursley Ponds	23036	SU917407
SU95	Henley Park Lake	23018	SU934536
SU95	Worplesdon Place Hotel	23019	SU975535
SU97	Cow Pond	23002	SU975715
SU97	Obelisk Pond	23001	SU974703
TQ03	Vachery Pond	23050	TQ070372
TQ04	Albury Ponds	23058	TQ055480
TQ04	Bramley Mill Pond	23054	TQ001440
TQ04	Chilworth Station Pond	23057	TQ031472
TQ04	Eastwater House Bramley	23053	TQ005445
TQ04	Hallams Pond	23056	TQ038451
TQ04	Tangley Mere	23055	TQ027471
TQ06	Ashford Common Waterworks	23105	TQ086697
TQ06	Charlton GP	23212	TQ087694
TQ06	Charlton Village Gravel Pit	23219	TQ086692
TQ06	Chertsey Reservoir	23104	TQ048681
TQ06	Disabled Angling Gravel Pit	23257	TQ037692
TQ06	Elmbridge Model Club Gravel Pits	23262	TQ017694
TQ06	Feltham Piscatorial	23263	TQ030696
TQ06	Ferry Lane Gravel Pit	23218	TQ076662
TQ06	Genets Marine Gravel Pits	23255	TQ038694
TQ06	Littleton Lane West Gravel Pits	23216	TQ055675
TQ06	Old Charlton Road Gravel Pit	23230	TQ078683
TQ06	Penton Hook Marina	23256	TQ040689
TQ06	Pickhurst Reserve	23047	TQ040691
TQ06	Twynersh Fishing Complex	23265	TQ033674
TQ06	Wey Farm	23028	TQ017627
TQ07	Brps GP	23268	TQ035745
TQ07	Poyle GPs (Old)	23202	TQ025765
TQ07	Poyle Meadows	23306	TQ022759
TQ07	Poyle Meadows Gravel Pits	23204	TQ027767
TQ07	Spout Wood GP	23203	TQ045755
TQ07	Staines Moor GPs	23206	TQ032736
TQ07	Staines Moor Meadow	23305	TQ031731

TQ07	Stanwell Moor GPs	23201	TQ035744
TQ07	Stanwell Moor West Gravel Pit	23208	TQ049746
TQ13	Vann Lake	23065	TQ156395
TQ14	Broome Hall Coldharbour	23070	TQ153424
TQ14	Bury Hill Lake	23071	TQ151480
TQ14	Milton Court Dorking	23072	TQ155495
TQ14	Ockley Court Lake	23068	TQ156404
TQ14	Park Farm Reservoir	23069	TQ164414
TQ16	Claremont Lake Esher	23088	TQ129630
TQ16	Hurst Park (E Molesey)	23086	TQ145691
TQ16	Longwater Burwood Park	23027	TQ103641
TQ16	Manor Farm Pond	23091	TQ165640
TQ16	River Ember - East Molesey	23311	TQ144673
TQ16	River Thames - Hampton Bridge	24307	TQ150687
TQ16	River Thames - Hurst Park	23310	TQ144689
TQ16	River Thames behind Molesey Reservoir	23301	TQ125689
TQ16	West End Pond	23089	TQ127637
TQ16	Weston Green	23090	TQ150662
TQ17	River Thames - Barnes to Kew	24302	TQ198769
TQ25	Holmethorpe Complex	23245	TQ298519
TQ25	Holmethorpe Sandpits	23242	TQ292516
TQ25	Mercers Park Lake	23240	TQ298518
TQ25	The Moors	23244	TQ292513
TQ26	Cannon Hill Common Lake	24019	TQ239685
TQ26	R Wandle - Mill Close to Mitcham Bridge	24314	TQ279666
TQ27	King George's Park Lake	24020	TQ254743
TQ27	River Thames - Putney to Battersea	24418	TQ265763
TQ27	R Wandle, Morden Hall Tram to W'sworth	24316	TQ260715
TQ35	Glebe Lake	23209	TQ307514
TQ35	Mercers West	23243	TQ301524
TQ35	Spyne's Mere	23079	TQ306523
TQ37	Burgess Park Lake	24029	TQ335780

The Wintering Thrushes Survey

This survey has just started again and anyone can become involved.

The information collected throughout the country last winter was incredible. During the Winter Thrushes Survey's first winter in 2012/13, over 1,600 observers made more than 12,600 visits to over 3,100 different sites, counting more than 811,000 birds. These numbers easily exceeded all expectations.

Last year I managed to get all of the specific sites chosen by the BTO for the survey covered by my surveyors so a big thank you to everyone who helped with those sites. I have e-mailed all those surveyors and asked them to let me know if they cannot cover their site this year. No one has told me so far that they cannot do so but, if you are one of those surveyors and cannot cover your site this year (only one visit is needed between 27th December and 10th January) then please do let me know as soon as possible.

What the BTO is really hoping for is that everyone who selected their own site will cover it again this year. In this way they should discover how the thrush numbers and food sources can differ between two consecutive winter seasons and to what extent conclusions from the survey can be generalised across winters, regions and habitat types. As the berry crop this year is clearly going to be so much better than last year, it will be fascinating to see how the results do vary. So please cover your site again, even if you cannot visit it as often as you did last year. Also, if you did not get involved last year, please get involved this year. Become a citizen-scientist. The survey methods are the same and can be found at

www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/winter-thrushes/survey-methods.

As you may well know the BTO are doing a number of bird

ID videos in order to help distinguish some similar species. One you might find helpful, if carrying out this survey, is the one showing the differences between Redwing and Fieldfare. You can find it at

www.bto.org/about-birds/bird-id/bto-bird-id-redwing-and-fieldfare?dm_i=NXX,1U2YM,3JRM5P,6KGH6,1

What I did over the summer

I was involved with my usual BTO summer surveys of BBS, WBBS and the Wider Countryside Butterfly survey (using my BBS site). I also covered my WeBS site throughout the summer. Living in north-west Surrey I have lots of heathland around so, as well as carrying out a reptile survey once a month on Brentmoor heath, I also helped with the heathland surveys looking on Chobham Common for Woodlark (none in my survey area at all) and Dartford Warbler (only one singing male). However, when I carry out these surveys, I not only count the special heathland birds that are there (or not there) but also count all the other bird (and dragonfly) species I see and enter the sightings into Birdtrack. I saw a Kestrel on quite a few of my visits to Chobham Common (and one flying over the houses in Sunninghill when I was taking a walk out of my office at lunchtime) so those sightings were also entered onto the Hawk Conservancy Trust website where they are collating results from throughout the country. If you see a kestrel you can report it through their website <http://www.kestrelcount.org/>

As an aside, if you have not visited it yet, the Hawk Conservancy Trust near Andover is a very special place www.hawk-conservancy.org/index.asp. You get wonderful views of different species of raptors flying. Normally a view of a raptor in the British countryside is a fleeting view but here you get to see them really well (including Owls in the woodland glade). My husband and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary there with family and friends and here is a picture of the young peregrine falcon that we sponsor. He was born last year and the trust has a naming theme for each year. Last year it was Olympic athletes so our young peregrine is called Usain Bolt. Here he is in his juvenile plumage still but, we are hoping to visit him again soon and get a photograph of him in his adult plumage.

The Surrey Wildlife Trust Bioblitz

This took place in June and I was there representing both the BTO and the Surrey Bird Club. With the assistance of other club members we led walks counting all the species of birds and Steve Chastell and Diane Williamson very kindly put on a ringing demonstration. I am not sure we managed to recruit any new ringers (my ambition at the moment more about which see below) but a good selection of species was caught and shown to the members of the public attending the Bioblitz. In all 8 species of bird were ringed and 43 species seen over the 24 hour period of the Bioblitz.

Where you can meet me

I am giving a talk (with a slideshow) about the WeBS survey on Saturday 14th October at 10 am at the Sutton Ecology Centre, Festival Walk, Carshalton SM5 3NY. After the talk there will be a demonstration of how to carry out the WeBS survey by walking upon a stretch of the River Wandle. Numbers are limited but, if you are interested in coming along, please contact Robin Searle on Robin.Searle@sutton.gov.uk in order to see if any places are left.

I will also be at the BTO Annual conference in Swanwick over the weekend of 6th to 8th December Here is an outline



of what is happening at the conference <http://www.bto.org/news-events/events/2013-12/bto-annual-conference>. I have been the last two years and can thoroughly recommend it. You get to meet a lot of like minded people and the talks are really inspirational.

I am available to give talks about my role for the BTO (with the addition of some slides from my holidays) called "A Year in the Life of a Regional Rep". If you are involved in an organisation and would be interested in hearing a talk from me please do not hesitate to contact me. I ask for a donation to be made to the BTO in exchange for my talk.

How you can help me

Apart from becoming involved in the surveys, or telling me of survey sites which are not accessible, I have a major project which would benefit the BTO in future years if I can get it off the ground. As you know I am also involved with Surrey Bird Club and our President made a very generous donation with a request that it be used to enthuse the younger generation in birds. Now if I can do that I will, hopefully, get them interested enough that they want to become involved in carrying out surveys, bird ringing or nest recording or perhaps all three. My initial thoughts are of holding an event where young people can come along and see demonstrations of bird ringing, listen to a lecture about nest recording, learn a bit of basic bird ID, be taken on a walk to look for the birds, perhaps have the opportunity of learning about photography and drawing etc. However, as one person I talked to about this idea said, I then need some way of harnessing any enthusiasm raised by such an event.

So, if you have any ideas about how such an event might progress and how to keep any children, who do wish to learn more, still involved then please do contact me.

Finally a joke. My husband has just come in from outside where he has been pruning the lavenders. He has had to stop due to all the spiders webs. He told me he was going to do a WeBS count. He thought it was funny!

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