

Surrey

Newsletter – Spring 2012

Dear BTO Member/BTO surveyor

Introduction

This is my second *Newsletter*. After my appointment in November 2010 it took almost a year to produce my first one but my aim now is to produce one twice a year in order to keep you up to date with what is going on in Surrey. Spring/early summer is of course a busy time for surveys and whilst I am writing this I can hear the Blue Tit moving around in our camera nestbox (material has been brought in for the last couple of weeks) and outside the window hidden in the ivy I have discovered a Robin using an old open nestbox we have had up for years which has never been used before (and I must remember to report these through the BTO nest box challenge).

If you have joined the BTO since my first *Newsletter* then welcome. Whether new or not please contact me if you want to know more about how you can become more involved in helping the BTO with its surveys in Surrey.

I had some wonderfully positive feedback from my first *Newsletter*. It was really nice to see that the time I had put into writing the *Newsletter* had been appreciated. However, as well as the feedback, I had a number of offers of help with surveys. This does not mean I am no longer looking for surveyors (more on that later) but means my list of vacant sites is quite a lot shorter.

My website

Since producing that *Newsletter* my challenge has been to get a website up and running. I have finally managed to do so and this is in large part due to help from my husband Peter as he runs the website for the Wensleydale railway (the only help he can realistically give this volunteer run railway as we live in Surrey) so I owe him many thanks. If you look at his website (www.wensleydalerailway.com) you might see some similarities!

The address of my website is www.surreybtorep.co.uk and the purpose of the website is two-fold. One is to give some more information about the surveys for which I am responsible (although there is also some information about some other BTO surveys) which involves providing, as well as some other information, an up to date list of the sites that need surveying. However the other reason for the website is to provide information about where I will be at some public events so that, if you are going along to them, you can come and meet me because it is really nice putting faces to the names in the database I keep of BTO members and surveyors (as you do not have to be a member of the BTO in order to carry out their surveys although I and the BTO would love you to join).

In case you do not have internet access I will let you know at the end of this newsletter where I am going to be over the coming months (when I am not doing my surveys as that busy time of year is coming up). By the way if anyone would like to come along with me on any of my BBS or WBBS surveys in order to see what is involved (Chobham and the Jubilee River near Windsor) do let me know. If these places are too far away but you would like to go out with a surveyor let me know and I will see if I can find someone closer to you who would be prepared to take you out (although I do know that some surveyors like to be on their own!)

How you can help the BTO Urgent Help – Nightingales

The most important issue at the moment is the Nightingale survey. I have two types of sites which need surveying. The BTO expect me to get all the Priority sites covered by a surveyor and I still have a few of those sites which do need a surveyor. However I also have quite a few Non-Priority sites which I do not have to get covered but it would be really good if I could get them surveyed as well. My website contains the list showing the sites where I still need help. The Priority sites are nearly all in the south-west of Surrey but the Non-Priority ones are all over the county.

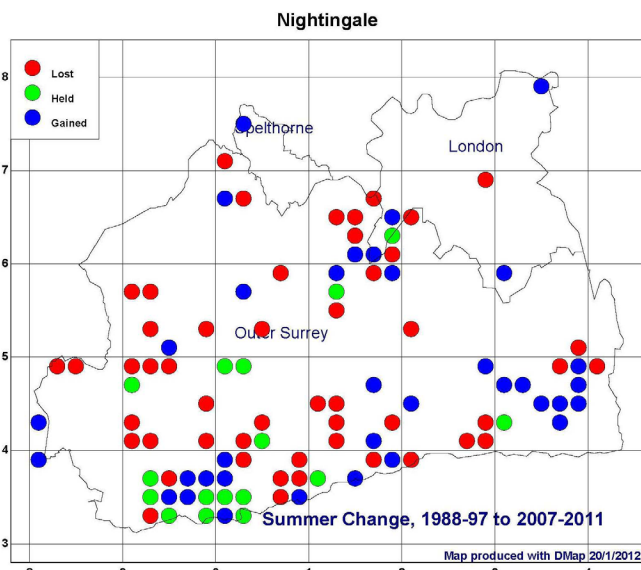
The dates for the survey are (they have changed slightly) 21 April to 14 May so it is not far off. Two sites visits are required between those two dates and you are asked to finish the site visits by 8.30 am. I know that means an early start but it is dawn chorus time which means you will get a chance to enjoy the dawn chorus as well as, if you are really lucky, finding a nightingale.

The second part of the survey involves two (optional) night visits between 18 May and 14 June. First of all this is only required if a nightingale has been heard during the day time survey and, secondly, I know quite a few of my surveyors are not happy to do a night survey. Therefore I am going to organise a 'hit squad' to cover those sites which have had nightingales singing so do not worry if you do not feel happy with this second part of the survey.

However the most important thing is that, even if you do not want to commit yourself to a specified tetrad (a 2 km square) for this survey, you can still help by providing the BTO with a record of any sighting (by sight or sound) that you have of a nightingale. This can be done through BirdTrack or by completing a Casual Records sheet (which I can let you have). Whichever way you let the BTO know please could you also let me know the grid reference (8 digit if at all possible) and date of the sighting so that I can ask someone else (if you

cannot do so) to follow up on that sighting.

To encourage you to become involved here is a map showing the distribution changes between 1988 and 2011. The map has kindly been produced by Jeff Wheatley who used to be the Surrey County Recorder but is still heavily involved with the Surrey Bird Club.



The other help I still need is

1. More square stewards (see below)
2. More WeBS surveyors (see my website)
3. More BBS surveyors (see my website)
4. Identifying Heronries (see my website)
5. The Bird Atlas in Surrey (see below)

If you don't have internet access do not worry, I can send all the information in paper format or speak to you on the telephone and any survey results can still be entered on paper forms.

Becoming a square steward. As a square steward you are responsible for a 10 KM square. The current squares that have vacancies for the role are: SU95, TQ03, TQ04 and TQ14.

As a square steward I ask that you know the area for which you are the steward well enough in order to know the species of birds which are likely to be found in the square and the types of habitat present. Although not a requirement for the role it would really suit someone who still wants to help out and used to be very active in their 'patch' but is now unable to get out and about as much as they like.

The Bird Atlas 2007–2011 (courtesy of Hugh Evans) (or 2012 so far as Surrey is concerned)

In Penny's 2011 *Newsletter* I highlighted the success of four years of concentrated fieldwork to map the distribution and abundance of birds across Britain and Ireland. With square-bashing for the National Atlas now complete the data are being analysed and the species accounts written.

The *Bird Atlas* will be published by BTO Books hopefully by mid-August 2013. There will be a special pre-publication offer of £45 (plus p&xp) and this will be promoted widely nearer the time through the BTO, SOC and BirdWatch Ireland. The full retail price will be £70. In setting the pre-publication price the BTO and its partners wish to recognise the huge investment in time, effort and money made by Atlas volunteers and supporters. The book is expected to contain

690 pages and be slightly larger than A4 format. Each species will occupy two facing pages which will include concise species accounts in order to allow maximum space for maps, as many as seven per species, which will concentrate on distribution and relative abundance for both Winter and Breeding seasons and the changes that have taken place since the previous Atlases.

The Surrey Bird Club has elected to extend the local atlas fieldwork by a further year, in order to plug obvious species gaps in certain tetrads and in order to get a more detailed distribution at a county level than is achievable in the national atlas. Thanks to a dedicated band of county birders the data collection has been extremely successful so far, and for the winter records (2011-2012), the minimum in all tetrads has been raised to over 30 species by the end of January 2012.

Breeding Season 2012

A table showing the species totals in each tetrad over the four breeding seasons (2008–11) shows the highs and lows (see overleaf).

There are ten tetrads with fewer than 20 species recorded:-

SU95Y SW Woking
TQ04R Winterfold
TQ05J Pyrford
TQ07M Heathrow (formerly Perry Oaks SF!)
TQ07V Ashford Common
TQ25K Reigate
TQ25Q Reigate/Redhill
TQ25R Gatton
TQ35C SW Caterham
TQ35S Woldingham

Any visits to these, and other tetrads with low numbers, will be particularly welcomed. But it is not just the species totals we need to boost, it is the upgrading of the breeding status from seen > possible > probable > confirmed breeding. The current status can be viewed on the BirdAtlas.net website and by typing in the location (10 kilometre square and tetrad letter, and selecting 'Breeding season'). If you are able to help but need more information please do not hesitate to send me (*ie* Hugh) an email. Any breeding records for the period April to July 2012 will be welcomed, especially if they provide new information. The BTO Atlas online database remains available to clubs that have extended their atlas period, so please continue to use this facility, but note there is a special box for observations made after 31 October 2011.

Anybody using paper forms is requested to post them to me (no longer directly to BTO) at the address shown below.

As for the Winter period (shown previously) there are some outstanding results from nine tetrads all of which exceed 100 species in the four seasons so far (see above).

SU84K	113	Frensham Ponds
SU84U	130	Tice's Meadow / Badshot Lea
SU94A	122	Thursley Common
SU94X	112	Unstead SF
SU97Q	103	Windsor Gt. Park
TQ07G	101	Staines Moor
TQ07L	113	Staines Res.
TQ26Y	143	Beddington Farm
TQ27I	180	London Wetlands Centre

Table 1. Species totals by tetrad for Breeding Seasons 2008-2011. Table showing the breeding species totals recorded in every tetrad for the Surrey Atlas publication which will cover the Watsonian Vice County of Surrey plus Spelthorne.

tenkm	all	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
SU83	110					89					59				44	56		50	44	50	42	36	52	46	64	58
SU84	167	59	54	61	50	33	77	35	51	49	77	113	72	26	54	53	85	65	63	55	130	58	70	49	33	60
SU85	116						72									63				58	59	56	57	56	64	37
SU86	119											50					66	66				31	49	62		
SU93	98	60	41	49	53	57	54	48	48	48	57		48	49	42	42		47	49	50	43		52	48	40	38
SU94	151	122	47	69	75	36	79	58	56	67	36	81	46	43	49	28	43	46	64	67	38	61	44	112	73	51
SU95	107	50	38	47	36	44	42	55	56	46	37	41	57	52	61	40	40	55	46	45	41	44	83	41	9	40
SU96	112	24	51	53			55	39	46	37		45	37	51	42		53	46	73	48	66	65	54	55	59	64
SU97	123																103	68				70	64			
TQ03	88		38	36	44	45		44	55	36	48		36	42	40	32			34	44	30			51	45	32
TQ04	110	42	48	49	61	58	44	20	52	75	50	51	39	40	53	51	29	10	32	58	55	37	24	40	79	55
TQ05	135	87	81	55	55	42	44	46	57	88	16	83	46	31	69	54	47	44	48	71	85	45	50	71	55	65
TQ06	151	80	59	49	64	91	48	40	52	42	84	50	75	52	73	76	51	63	74	88	67	40	37	55	73	64
TQ07	171	68	95				70	101	84	69		50	113	17	59		55	66	45			13		49		
TQ13	84			40	43	45			53	50	55					50	41				53	26			51	41
TQ14	123	57	44	43	48	50	56	73	38	54	44	54	30	58	51	48	54	56	48	41	59	54	30	56	45	56
TQ15	112	37	34	65	70	60	45	52	65	77	58	53	46	50	67	48	52	45	65	42	59	38	39	42	41	59
TQ16	167	42	34	38	68	65	40	76	57	81	98	40	41	41	51	77	69	60	48	55	79	71	67	39	57	62
TQ17	138	98					81										57	79	63	50		52	73	43	76	
TQ23	80					43					48					50						53				55
TQ24	102	34	62	43	23	26	41	35	35	55	45	52	39	44	37	59	54	52	36	57	63	46	45	46	37	45
TQ25	130	40	27	43	35	45	35	45	65	48	43	12	28	43	64	65	1	3	46	53	28	84	57	51	57	42
TQ26	174	41	60	46	54	42	37	47	33	56	40	49	38	41	34	35	42	36	44	42	66	38	27	96	143	47
TQ27	193	50	69	54	63		74	75	44	180	41	34	51	70			64	43	45	45		29	45	41	56	
TQ33	80					49					49					47						52				50
TQ34	117	47	50	47	59	49	57	60	50	57	52	85	49	52	52	56	80	95	67	54	65	57	61	69	56	57
TQ35	124	79	96	4	57	52	48	47	37	34	59	76	40	42	31	57	60	57	12	53	48	56	52	41	56	50
TQ36	110	39	52	57	36	53	55	57	53	51	53	67	55	45	47	79	61	51	64	45		47	49	37		
TQ37	103	42	45	36	31	43	44	57	25	38	42	50	48	53	36	25					47	55				
TQ38	88	36					49					51					51									
TQ43	83					52						54														
TQ44	143	38	40	37	56	41	41	30	59	29	37															
TQ45	80	49	27	32	28	40	49	42	31	33	29															

The enormous effort and hours of fieldwork given so freely by so many volunteers has already produced some fascinating results. If you have access to the Internet, please visit the Surrey Bird Club website (www.surreybirdclub.org.uk) and click on the News page where you will be able to view the latest (preliminary) maps for all but the scarcest species in Surrey – both for Winter and the Breeding Season (please note there is a small delay before the maps appear due to the size of the file.)

Hugh Evans (Atlas Regional Organiser for Surrey)
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 Address: 31 Crescent Road, Shepperton, Middx TW17 8BL

How I might be able to help you

Occasionally the BTO is able to offer funding so that training can be carried out. For example Oxfordshire carried out some training for current and potential BBS surveyors earlier this month. Please let me know if you would be interested in any form of training. I have also have some CDs with bird songs and calls on them which can help you with the not so common birds around our area.

I also visited in early March the Berks and Oxon Bird forum which was jointly organised by the BTO and Berkshire and

Oxfordshire bird clubs. It was excellent and I learnt a lot from all of the speakers. There is a lot of organisation involved in such a conference and the organisers told me that they put on such a conference once every two years. Since I have belonged to the BTO and Surrey Bird Club we have not had such a conference in Surrey. Might you be interested in one? It gives you a chance to meet other birders and surveyors and learn more about local issues. If you would be interested do let me know.

The Nightjar surveys

These are not organised by the BTO but are part of the Thames Basin Heathland surveys and I have been taking part in them for a number of years now. There are three good things about them

1. With any luck you get to see a Nightjar and, if not, you should certainly hear one
2. You nearly always also see or hear roding Woodcock
3. If you do the Pirbright/Ash surveys you can get to go on some parts that are usually/often inaccessible due to the army.

If you would like to become involved then please contact the organisers directly. They are David Cary on david.cary@

ntlworld.com and John Clark on johnclark50@sky.com. If you do not have email give me a ring and I will take your details and pass them on to David/John as appropriate.

The dates for the surveys are

- **Wednesday 23 May** – Chobham Common RV at the roundabout carpark off B383 at GR SU965650 at 8.00 pm.
- **Wednesday 30 May** – Ash Ranges RV at the range control/gate house at GR SU 896528 at 8.00 pm. This is the entrance past the Swan on Heath Bridge Road, Ash Vale
- **Thursday 7 June** – Pirbright Ranges RV at the Colony Gate entrance on the B3511 at GR SU909588 at 8.15 pm.

Where you can meet me this year

- **Sat 21 and Sun 22 April** – London Wild Birdwatch 2012 at WWT Barnes <http://londonwildbirdwatch.co.uk> – I will be there on the BTO stand on both Saturday and Sunday.
- **Saturday 19 May** – British Trust for Ornithology Bird Identification Workshop at Painshill, Cobham, Surrey (Cost £75.00) 5 am to 12 noon

Booking: Advance booking required. Please call the Bookings Manager (Sarah Ann Hallett) on 01932 868113 x 203. Her email address is SarahHallett@painshill.co.uk You can pay by cheque, credit or debit card.

The advertising says 'A unique opportunity to enter the beautiful 18th century landscape and enjoy the dawn chorus at on a guided walk. After breakfast there will be a workshop led by Steve Piotrowski from the BTO. Steve will teach you how to identify birds by song and by sight, focusing on the wide variety of species found at Painshill from Great Crested Grebes to woodpeckers and warblers. The Workshop includes the guided walk, breakfast, morning coffee/tea and a special bird song and call identification CD box set'

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• **Thames Basin Nightjar surveys**

I am intending to do all three so will be at the meeting points where everyone meets before being sent off to their designated survey area (see above for where these are).

• **Surrey Bird Club**

As General & Membership Secretary for the Club I will be at the AGM which is taking place on Friday 21 September at 8 pm. There will be a talk (details will be put on the Surrey Bird Club website shortly at <http://www.surreybirdclub.org.uk> and non-members are allowed to attend (just not vote!)

Reminders

1. If you are on email and have received this newsletter by post please let me have your email address.
2. Please remember to tell me if you change your e-mail address.
3. Some of the feedback from my previous Newsletter was from members who indicated that they are not going to be able to participate in surveys and, therefore, although they had enjoyed reading the *Newsletter*, not to incur the time and expense of sending them one again. If this is your view please do let me know either by email to penny@waxwing.plus.com or phone 01276 857736. Leave a message on the answerphone and I will take you off my mailing list.

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