



Founded 1964

## **SECOS GARDEN BIRD SURVEY FOR OCTOBER 2007 TO MARCH 2008**

### **The Survey Recorders**

This year the number of anticipated participants was fifty-eight. In the 2007 part of the survey records were received from fifty-one, with fifty-two received for the second session in 2008. The number of contributors remained substantially the same as in the last survey, with five new recorders joining and four previous contributors not continuing. Seven survey members are not members of SECOS, one less than last year. Once more the level of support is most encouraging and a big thank-you is extended to all contributors new and old.

*Table 1* below lists the people who recorded for this survey together with their registration number. Please note your number for the next survey.

***Table 1***

<b><u>Req. No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Req. No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>
8501	Hilary Clowes	0227	Andrew & Doreen Bailey
8502	Bryan Perkins	0128	Gordon Fleet & Kath Conroy
9703	John & Wendy Smith	0430	John Goulding
9704	Janet Grice	8731	John P. Barker
8505	David & Elaine Meakin	0432	Avril Watkins
0406	Glyn Jones	0333	Alan Robson
0107	Christine Howarth	0334	Bill Bellamy
0208	Stan Wildig	9635	Ron & Doreen Jones
0409	Marie Turner	9636	Geoff Yarwood
0610	Andy Firth	0237	Derek Leigh
8511	Alan & Joan Soper	0639	Chris Parry
0612	Alan Straw	0240	Cynthia Cadman
9813	John Thompson	0341	Howard Nixon
9814	Colin Lythgoe	0342	Brian Sankey
0115	Megan McKelvey	0343	John Fuller
0316	Paul & Margaret Harvey	0645	Julie Cartlidge
9817	Lorna Pickstock	0546	Peter & Sally Hough
8518	Ann Pym	0347	Sylvia Jarvis
0119	George & Barbara Fisher	0548	Anne & Chris Furness
9820	Bill & Betty Brookes	0552	Lillian Shufflebotham
9921	Barbara Hubbard	0753	Mike Warrington
0522	David Braithwaite	0754	Brian Burke
9923	Janet & Peter Roberts	0556	Bill & Jan Fox
0024	Derek Owen	0757	Val Hannam
0025	Alan & Linda Battersby	0758	Brian & Susan Plowright
0026	Charles Hull	0759	Rachel Minshull

## The Cumulative (All Time) Bird Species List

Since the beginning of SECOS Garden Bird Surveys in 1985, seventy-six different species of birds have now been recorded as listed in *Table 2* below in alphabetical order. No additional species were recorded this year

**Table 2**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Bird Species</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Bird Species</b>
1	Black-headed Gull	39	Long-tailed Tit
2	Blackbird	40	Magpie
3	Blackcap	41	Mallard
4	Blue Tit	42	Marsh/ Willow Tit
5	Brambling	43	Meadow Pipit
6	Bullfinch	44	Merlin
7	Buzzard	45	Mistle Thrush
8	Chaffinch	46	Moorhen
9	Chiffchaff	47	Mute Swan
10	Coal Tit	48	Nuthatch
11	Collared Dove	49	Pheasant
12	Common Gull	50	Pied Wagtail
13	Corn Bunting	51	Raven
14	Crow	52	Red-headed Bunting
15	Dunnock	53	Red-legged Partridge
16	Feral Pigeon	54	Redpoll (Lesser)
17	Fieldfare	55	Redwing
18	Garden Warbler	56	Reed Bunting
19	Goldcrest	57	Ring-necked Parakeet
20	Goldfinch	58	Robin
21	Great Spotted Woodpecker	59	Rook
22	Great Tit	60	Siskin
23	Green Woodpecker	61	Skylark
24	Greenfinch	62	Snipe
25	Grey Heron	63	Song Thrush
26	Grey Wagtail	64	Sparrowhawk
27	Herring Gull	65	Starling
28	House Martin	66	Stock Dove
29	House Sparrow	67	Swallow
30	Jackdaw	68	Tawny Owl
31	Jay	69	Tree Sparrow
32	Kestrel	70	Treecreeper
33	Kingfisher	71	Water Rail
34	Lapwing	72	Willow Warbler
35	Lesser Black-backed Gull	73	Woodcock
36	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	74	Wood Pigeon
37	Linnet	75	Wren
38	Little Owl	76	Yellowhammer

## The Current Survey

Fifty-two participants producing bird records over a period of twenty-six weeks could produce a maximum of 1352 bird/week records (52x26 =1352). Due to people being not available to record at various times, for reasons like holidays and sickness, the actual number of bird/week records produced was reduced by 93 to 1259

## The “Listed Species”

In *Table 3* below the species entered on the “listed species” section of the input forms “A1” & “A2” are listed in descending order of number of bird/week record occurrences, as a measure of their commonality within this survey.

Also shown in the table is the number of gardens visited, the highest single count recorded for each species and the registration number of the member(s) who made the highest count.

**Table 3 – ‘Ranking of Listed Species’**

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 1259)</u>	<u>Gardens Visited (Number of Out of 52)</u>	<u>Highest Single Count</u>	
				<u>Count</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>
1[1]	Blackbird	1227	52	14	9923
2[3]	Robin	1146	52	7	0612
3[2]	Blue Tit	1134	52	25	0612
4[5]	Wood Pigeon	1104	52	14	0342
5[4]	House Sparrow	999	47	35	8731
6[7]	Great Tit	937	50	17	0612
7[9]	Starling	928	51	250	0406
8[8]	Collared Dove	886	50	12	0556
9[10]	Chaffinch	853	46	20	0026
10[6]	Dunnock	847	51	5	9923
11[13]	Coal Tit	688	49	7	0237
12[12]	Magpie	624	46	16	0639
13[11]	Greenfinch	603	41	32	9923
14[14]	Wren	577	48	15	0612
15[15]	Goldfinch	547	45	28	0432
16[16]	Long-tailed Tit	371	42	32	0610
17[18]	Nuthatch	292	23	2	#
18[17]	Song Thrush	288	43	3	0107 & 9923
19[19]	Jackdaw	281	26	30	0026
20[20]	Crow	269	30	4	0237 & 0753
21[21]	Pied Wagtail	121	19	3	0115
22[*]	Sparrowhawk	86	26	2	0639

[ ] Denotes the corresponding ranking in the previous survey for comparison.

(See *Table 1* for correlation of registration No. to members' names.)

# (Nuthatch) - Joint equal count of 2 from 10 members, registration Nos. 0612, 0115, 0522, 9923, 0025, 0342, 0552, 0754, 0556 & 0758

Rankings within the table were little changed from the previous survey. Four species, blackbird, blue tit, robin and wood pigeon had a presence in every garden of the survey, as in the previous survey. The same species occupied the top ten list with minor juxtapositions in order.

\*In recognition of being far more common garden visitors from the evidence of recent surveys, sparrowhawks were newly promoted to the listed birds table for this survey, but this was not maintained with records of 131 from 32 gardens previously reduced to 86 records from 26 gardens.

Nineteen contributors from the total of fifty-two recorded the highest or joint highest count for at least one bird species. One member recorded the highest count for five species, one member for four species and three members for two species.

### **The “Other Species”**

In *Table 4* below the species entered on the “Other Species” section of the input forms “A1” & “A2” are listed in descending order of number of bird/week record occurrences, as a measure of their commonality within this survey. A further thirty-two species were recorded, giving a total number of fifty-four species recorded in this year’s survey {last survey fifty-five} from the seventy-six in the “all-time” list (*Table 2*). Any species recorded in the last survey, but not recorded in this survey, are included for reference.

**Table 4 – ‘Ranking of Other Species’**

<b><u>Rank No.</u></b>	<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 636)</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Gardens Visited (Out of 52)</u></b>
1 [1]	Great Spotted Woodpecker	177 [170]	21 [17]
2 [*]	Siskin	141 [6]	24 [4]
3 [5]	Bullfinch	118 [78]	19 [14]
4 [9]	Goldcrest	112 [44]	19 [12]
5 [8]	Jay	94 [45]	12 [9]
6 [3]	Pheasant	87 [98]	6 [9]
7 [4]	Mistle Thrush	86 [81]	15 [15]
8 [14]	Rook	62 [28]	6 [3]
9 [6]	Tree Sparrow	52 [74]	10 [9]
10 [7]	Redwing	42 [51]	11 [11]
11 [10]	Mallard	36 [42]	6 [7]
12 [21]	Stock Dove	32 [17]	3 [3]
13 [18]	Feral Pigeon	26 [22]	1 [2]
13 [12]	Fieldfare	26 [39]	5 [9]
15 [22]	Black Headed Gull	25 [15]	7 [5]
15 [13]	Grey Wagtail	25 [29]	7 [5]
15 [20]	Reed Bunting	25 [19]	5 [4]
18 [10]	Blackcap	24 [42]	10 [11]
19 [17]	Tawny Owl	23 [24]	5 [5]
20 [27]	Lesser Redpoll	15 [4]	4 [3]
21 [15]	Grey Heron	14 [26]	6 [7]
22 [15]	Treecreeper	13 [26]	6 [9]
23 [23]	Kestrel	11 [10]	2 [4]
24 [24]	Moorhen	10 [9]	4 [3]
25 [25]	Brambling	7 [0]	5 [0]
26 [25]	Buzzard	6 [6]	5 [2]
27 [25]	Chiffchaff	5 [6]	4 [4]

27 [30]	Red-legged Partridge	5 [0]	1 [0]
29 [28]	Little Owl	3 [0]	1 [0]
29 [28]	Yellow Hammer	3 [2]	2 [1]
31 [28]	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	2 [2]	2 [2]
32 [31]	Willow Warbler	1 [1]	1 [1]
[31]	Garden Warbler	0 [1]	0 [1]
[19]	Marsh/Willow Tit	0 [21]	0 [2]
[28]	Raven	0 [2]	0 [1]
[31]	Ring-necked Parakeet	0 [1]	0 [1]

[ ] Denotes corresponding figures to the previous {2006/07} survey for comparison

### **The “Other Species.”**

Records of brambling, red-legged partridge and little owl had a small presence in this survey, having been absent from the last.

Garden warbler, marsh/willow tit, raven and ring-necked parakeet were not recorded this time.

Redwings continued to be more numerous than fieldfares.

Siskins were demoted from the “listed bird” part of the survey to the “other species” listing in this survey, but their record count recovered greatly, with small numbers appearing in a half of the gardens taking part, with a highest individual count of ten.

Blackcap numbers retreated further from the low numbers in the last survey.

Bullfinch, goldcrest, jay and rook records showed significant increases.

Great-spotted woodpecker records retained last year’s position of being the most common bird of the “Other Species” table

Lesser redpolls though not common enjoyed a greater presence.

Mistle thrushes maintained the numbers of the last survey.

Six records of buzzards were again included though this time from five different gardens rather than two.

### **News from the Comments Column (Section “B1” &”B2” of the input forms)**

Once more, cats cause concerns. One member stopped feeding for a period so as not to tempt birds to an early demise. A cat climbed a conifer to hang over a nest box occupied by a blue tit, but a well directed handful of gravel helped it to find its way down.

Two roosts of wrens in one garden was notable, with a rope style nest box thought to house eight and a further seven taking refuge in a nest box concealed by ivy.

No fewer than forty-seven siskins turned up in one garden.

There far fewer reports of sparrowhawks taking prey but a collared dove was mentioned as one victim.

Lost sleep was reported due to a tawny owl and a little owl simultaneously calling on one night.

A grey wagtail turned up in one garden probably due to a waterfall and small garden pond feature.

A goldcrest was a regular garden visitor to feed on a fat ball. Bullfinch and nuthatch were recorded on sunflower seed feeders. Redwings were reported stripping holly berries and fieldfares feasting on windblown apples.

Chaffinches were reported to have a fungal infection on their legs in one garden in January, from which happily they appeared to eventually recover.

Redpoll visits were reported as first recorded visitors to some gardens and the same for the odd brambling.

A house sparrow shoe-horned its way into a blue tit box and proceeded to make a nest

A record of twenty-eight pied wagtails and two snipe was ruled ineligible as it was in an adjacent field – a pity.

## Weather Conditions

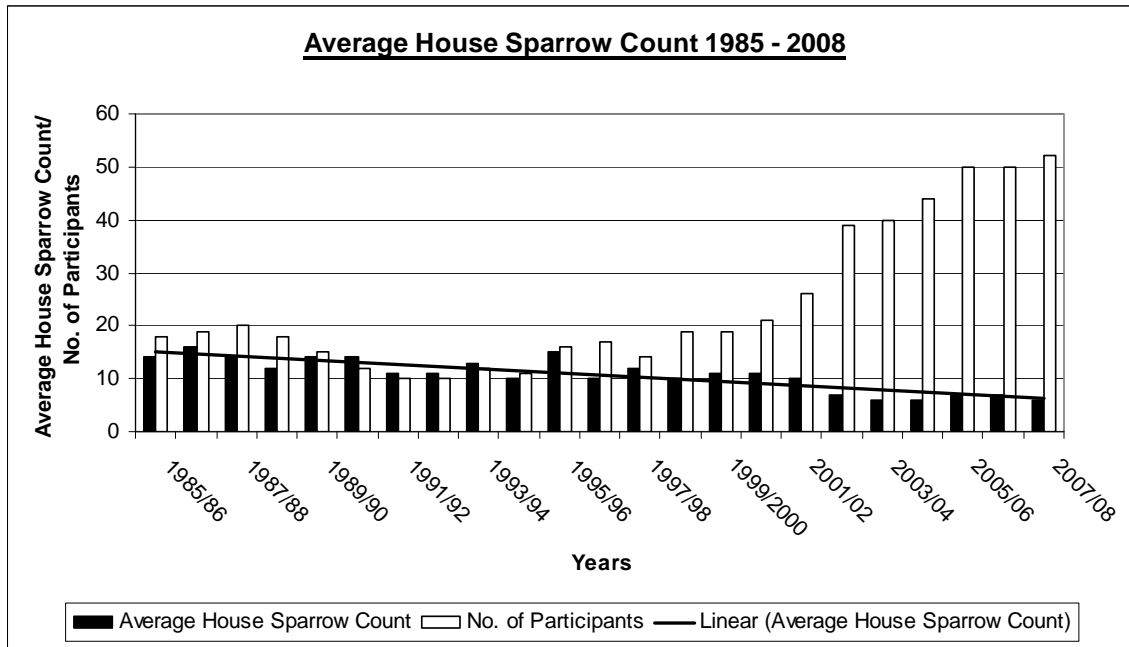
Table 5 provides a brief overview of weather conditions for the twenty-six week period, which, as usual, is provided courtesy of John Barker's detailed records.

**Table 5 – Weather Summary**

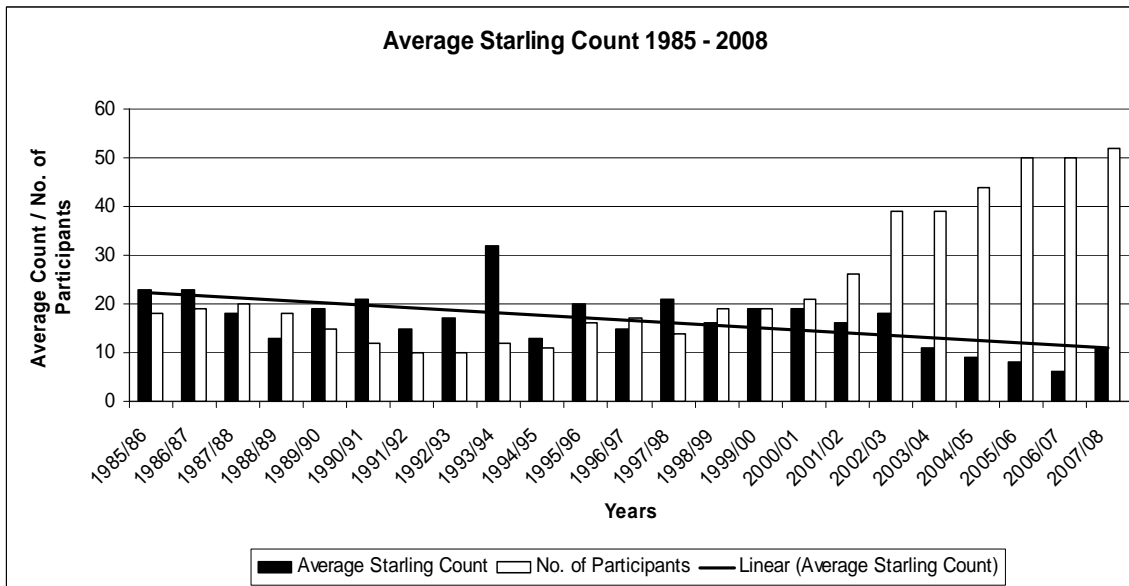
<u>Week No.</u>	<u>Number of Days</u>			<u>Inches of Rain</u>	<u>Temp. °F</u>		<u>Wind</u>		<u>One Word Notes</u>
	<u>Sunny Periods</u>	<u>Frost Snow Sleet</u>	<u>Wet cloudy</u>		<u>Max</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Strength</u>	
1	0	0	7	0.30	64	41	NW	Light	Cloudy
2	1	0	3	0.30	61	30	SW-NW	Light	Cloudy
3	2	0	1	0.07	61	27	SE	Moderate	Cloudy
4	0	0	4	0.57	59	36	NW	Light-mod	Mixed
5	0	0	6	0.43	55	37	NW	Fresh	Cloudy
6	4	4F	3	0.30	51	25	NW-SE	Calm	Brighter
7	1	0	6	0.84	56	31	SE-NW	Light-Mod	Fresh
8	0	0	7	0.69	54	34	NW-SW	Light	Wet
9	0	0	7	1.97	54	34	W-NW	Strong	Cloudy
10	4	6F	3	0.18	42	24	NW-SE	Moderate	Sunnier
11	1	7F	1	?	38	23	SE	Moderate	Cloudy
12	0	1F	4	1.22	49	31	SW	Moderate	Cloudy
13	0	3F	3	0.26	51	34	SW-SE	Strong	Cloudy
14	0	5F	7	1.14	46	28	W	Strong	Thunder
15	0	0	7	1.75	52	35	SW-NW	Strong	Thunder
16	1	0	3	0.33	55	30	NW & SW	Blustery	
17	7	3	5	0.46	50	24	NW	Strong	Gales
18	2	2F	5	0.81	51	27	SW	Light-Mod	Variable
19	7	7F	0	0	53	20	SW-SE	Calm	Frosty
20	3	4F	4	0	51	35		Calm	Variable
21	0	2F	5	0.43	52	30	SW-NW	Strong	Variable
22	0	3F	4	0.19	52	25	NW	Moderate	Variable
23	0	1F	5	0.59	55	31	SW-NW	V Strong	Variable
24	0	4F	5	0.65	47	29	NE-NW	Strong	Variable
25	0	3F	7	0.76	54	27	NW	Blustery	Variable
26	6	1FSS	5	0.29	57	24	SW-NW	Fresh	Variable

## House Sparrow and Starling Research from the Garden Bird Survey Archives 1985 to 2008

The two bar charts used in previous reports have once more been updated to include the latest data from this survey and are presented below. The chart shows that the house sparrow trend is still down. Last year's optimism that a mini recovery might be under way is no longer supported.



The average count for starlings this year however showed a substantial increase from six or seven in recent years to eleven for this. The trend line however shows a continued decline over the twenty-three year period of the survey although the gradient is less severe.



Our survey still supports the general concerns that a decline in both populations is under way. The data is contained in two Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, each with in excess of twenty pages and can be made available to any member who would like to perform more analysis.

## **The Next Survey**

In anticipation and hope of your continued support forms for the 2008/09 Winter Garden Bird Survey will be provided to all present members of the survey team. Those who take email distribution will be in receipt by that medium and the remainder will receive forms with the pre-season newsletter.

I include my usual plea to be informed if anyone wishes to discontinue supporting the survey, so that I know when I am in receipt of the full complement of completed forms to allow the not inconsiderable task of analysing the data and preparation of the report to commence.

Again forms for any new recruits to the next survey will be available at the first club meeting in September. Please encourage others to join up, whether SECOS members or not, and emphasise the process is simple and undemanding.

If any further members are willing to receive the forms, guidelines and reports as e-mail attachments for the next Garden Bird Survey, please let me have your e-mail address. Where I have e-mail addresses I assume willingness for this form of transaction (it's far preferable, being quicker, more legible, greener, cheaper-saves photocopying costs to the club). My e-mail address is  
for contact and returning your completed forms.

Finally I include the usual offer to anyone who wishes to perform a more detailed analysis of the 2007/08 survey data than is contained in this report. I can make all of the data available to them as a copy of the database in Microsoft Access 2003 format, either as an e-mail attachment, on a 3.5" floppy disk or CD-ROM.

The early production of this report was greatly facilitated by the prompt return of the survey forms.

Again, many thanks to all contributors.

**Trevor Clowes.**

12th May 2008