



SECOS GARDEN BIRD SURVEY FOR OCTOBER 2016 TO MARCH 2017

The Survey Recorders

In this survey records were received from forty-six survey members in the first session and forty-eight in the second session, from the fifty-one members taking part. The number of contributors has decreased by four compared to the last survey. Sixteen survey members are not members of SECOS. Again the level of support is most encouraging and the usual 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. Since the first survey in 1985, a hundred and twelve people in total have taken part.

Table 1

<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>
8501	Hilary Clowes	1426	Teri Small
8502	Bryan Perkins	0128	Gordon Fleet & Kath Conroy
9703	John & Wendy Smith	1029	Peter & Marilyn Norbury
8505	David & Elaine Meakin	0430	John Goulding
1306	Roy Broughton	8731	John P. Barker
0107	Christine Howarth	0432	Avril Watkins
0208	Stan Wildig	1533	David Cookson
0409	Marie Turner	0334	Bill Bellamy
1010	John Nixon	9635	Doreen Jones
8511	Alan Soper	9636	Geoff Yarwood
0612	Alan Straw	1537	Heather Smith
9813	John Thompson	0838	Richard Howells
9814	Colin Lythgoe	0639	Chris Parry
1215	Louise Adams	0341	Howard Nixon
0316	Paul & Margaret Harvey	0342	Brian Sankey
1017	Mick Ball	0343	John & Wendy Fuller
8518	Ann Pym	0844	Dave O'Hara
0119	George & Barbara Fisher	1646	David Johnson
0720	Rachel Heath	1348	Graham Bailey
9921	Barbara Hubbard	1351	Ray Broughton
1022	Mike & Christine Brooks	1352	Lorna Pickstock
9923	Janet & Peter Roberts	0853	David Bromont
0024	Derek Owen	0556	Bill & Jan Fox
1025	John Varty	0758	Brian & Susan Plowright

The Cumulative (All Time) Bird Species List

Since the beginning of SECOS Garden Bird Surveys in 1985, eighty different species of birds have now been recorded as listed in *Table 2* below in alphabetical order. No new species has been added to the list by this survey

Table 2

No.	Bird Species	No.	Bird Species
1	Black-headed Gull	41	Magpie
2	Blackbird	42	Mallard
3	Blackcap	43	Marsh/ Willow Tit
4	Blue Tit	44	Meadow Pipit
5	Brambling	45	Mealy Redpoll
6	Bullfinch	46	Merlin
7	Buzzard	47	Mistle Thrush
8	Chaffinch	48	Moorhen
9	Chiffchaff	49	Mute Swan
10	Coal Tit	50	Nuthatch
11	Collared Dove	51	Pheasant
12	Common Gull	52	Pied Wagtail
13	Corn Bunting	53	Raven
14	Crow	54	Red-headed Bunting
15	Duncock	55	Red-legged Partridge
16	Feral Pigeon	56	Redpoll (Lesser)
17	Fieldfare	57	Redwing
18	Garden Warbler	58	Reed Bunting
19	Goldcrest	59	Ring-necked Parakeet
20	Goldfinch	60	Robin
21	Greater Black-backed Gull	61	Rook
22	Great Spotted Woodpecker	62	Siskin
23	Great Tit	63	Skylark
24	Green Woodpecker	64	Snipe
25	Greenfinch	65	Song Thrush
26	Grey Heron	66	Sparrowhawk
27	Grey Wagtail	67	Starling
28	Herring Gull	68	Stock Dove
29	House Martin	69	Swallow
30	House Sparrow	70	Tawny Owl
31	Jackdaw	71	Tree Sparrow
32	Jay	72	Treecreeper
33	Kestrel	73	Water Rail
34	Kingfisher	74	Waxwing
35	Lapwing	75	White Wagtail
36	Lesser Black-backed Gull	76	Willow Warbler
37	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	77	Woodcock
38	Linnet	78	Wood Pigeon
39	Little Owl	79	Wren
40	Long-tailed Tit	80	Yellowhammer

The Current Survey

Forty-eight participants producing bird records over a period of twenty-six weeks could produce a maximum of 1248 bird/week records (51 x 26 =1248). 1178 bird/weeks records were actually produced, just one hundred and twenty-four fewer than is actually possible.

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 are the number of gardens visited, the highest single count recorded for each species and the registration number of the member(s) who recorded the highest count.

Table 3 – ‘Ranking of Listed Species’

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records Out of 1178</u> [1242]	<u>Number of Gardens Visited Out of 48</u> [51]	<u>Highest Single Count</u>	
				<u>Count</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>
1 [1]	Wood Pigeon	1163 [1176]	48 [51]	26 [24]	0639
2 [3]	Blackbird	1111 [1104]	48 [51]	14 [22]	1537
3 [2]	Blue Tit	1104 [1125]	48 [51]	30 [17]	0512
4 [4]	Robin	1078 [1091]	48 [50]	4 [5]	#1
5 [6]	Dunnock	917 [889]	46 [49]	6 [6]	0342
6 [8]	Magpie	843 [783]	48 [51]	7 [9]	8502, 0844
7 [5]	Great Tit	837 [937]	48 [50]	11 [9]	1351
8 [7]	House Sparrow	735 [818]	42 [46]	40 [25]	8731
9 [10]	Goldfinch	683 [690]	42 [46]	36 [30]	0853
10 [11]	Collared Dove	645 [629]	46 [45]	9 [9]	8731
11 [12]	Chaffinch	571 [606]	42 [45]	22 [30]	1306
12 [15]	Starling	552 [478]	42 [41]	50 [63]	#2
13 [13]	Jackdaw	548 [593]	34 [38]	25 [66]	8731
14 [14]	Wren	513 [554]	45 [51]	3 [8]	1351
15 [9]	Coal Tit	495 [754]	40 [48]	6 [8]	1351
16 [17]	Greenfinch	435 [433]	38 [36]	9 [15]	0844
17 [18]	Crow	381 [365]	34 [37]	6 [4]	1537, 0844
18 [16]	Long-tailed Tit	373 [439]	40 [46]	24 [14]	8731
19 [19]	Nuthatch	218 [257]	22 [24]	3 [3]	1351
20 [20]	GS Woodpecker	171 [189]	25 [22]	3 [3]	0612
21 [21]	Sparrowhawk	130 [177]	29 [33]	2 [2]	1010, 8731
22 [22]	Song Thrush	120 [118]	24 [26]	2 [3]	#3

#1 Members No. 9921, 9923, 1351, 0853, 0758

#2 Members No. 1306, 0208, 0409, 0844

#2 Members No. 8501, 9703, 8511, 0024, 0342, 0758

Brackets thus [], denotes figures corresponding to the previous [2015/16] survey for comparison. (See *Table 1* for correlation of registration number to members’ names.)

In general, there was little change in the ranking order, the number of gardens visited or the highest count for all species when compared to the previous survey. Wood pigeons retained their most common bird status. Coal tits records were restored to more normal numbers.

Wood pigeon, blackbird, blue tit, robin, magpie and great tit were recorded in every garden.

Dunnocks were absent from two.

Twenty contributors from the total of forty-eight recorded the highest or joint highest count for at least one bird species. Two members recorded the highest or joint highest count for five species, whilst another clocked up the highest count for four 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-three species were recorded, giving a total number of fifty-five species recorded in this year’s survey {last survey fifty-three} from the eighty in the “all-time” list (*Table 2*). Any species recorded in the last survey, but not recorded in this survey, is included for reference.

Table 4 – ‘Ranking of Other Species’

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records Out of</u>		<u>Number of Gardens Visited Out of</u>		<u>Highest Single Count</u>	
		<u>587</u>	<u>[576]</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>[51]</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>
1 [1]	Bullfinch	171	[185]	18	[19]	6 [7]	1017
2 [3]	Goldcrest	130	[101]	22	[17]	4 [3]	0639
3 [4]	Pheasant	108	[97]	9	[7]	11 [6]	0612
4 [23]	Pied Wagtail	99	[11]	21	[3]	3 [2]	#1
5 [12]	Black Headed Gull	84	[36]	14	[11]	23 [20]	0208
6 [5]	Jay	73	[92]	7	[11]	6 [7]	1351
7 [7]	Rook	70	[76]	6	[10]	42 [54]	1306
8 [18]	Feral Pigeon	65	[23]	4	[4]	8 [4]	0208
9 [6]	Stock Dove	61	[77]	9	[11]	8 [5]	1306
10 [2]	Siskin	54	[129]	17	[25]	6 [22]	9636
11 [12]	Mistle Thrush	52	[36]	11	[10]	3 [4]	0639
12 [9]	Blackcap	41	[50]	14	[12]	3 [4]	1351
13 [9]	Redwing	37	[50]	13	[15]	30 [100]	0612
14 [17]	Grey Wagtail	35	[25]	7	[9]	1 [2]	#2
15 [13]	Tawny Owl	31	[34]	4	[3]	2 [2]	0409, 0639
16 [19]	Herring Gull	22	[20]	1	[4]	8 [2]	0208
17 [20]	Fieldfare	18	[17]	9	[4]	10 [5]	0556
18 [11]	Reed Bunting	17	[38]	3	[6]	6 [6]	1306
18 [21]	Grey Heron	17	[15]	5	[5]	1 [1]	#3
20 [24]	Lesser b-b gull	15	[5]	4	[1]	3 [1]	0208
21 [8]	Lesser Redpoll	14	[57]	5	[11]	8 [8]	8518
21 [15]	Treecreeper	14	[30]	7	[9]	1 [2]	#4
23 [15]	Tree Sparrow	11	[30]	3	[5]	2 [4]	8518, 1351
24 [25]	Chiffchaff	9	[4]	4	[4]	2 [2]	0639
25 [14]	Brambling	5	[31]	5	[5]	2 [4]	9923
25 [22]	Mallard	5	[12]	1	[4]	2 [2]	0556

Table 4 – ‘Ranking of Other Species’(Continued)

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records Out of</u>		<u>Number of Gardens Visited Out of</u>		<u>Highest Single Count</u>	
		<u>587</u>	<u>[576]</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>[51]</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>
27 [25]	Buzzard	3	[4]	3	[2]	1 [1]	#5
27 [27]	Greater b b Gull	3	[3]	2	[1]	5 [1]	0208
27 [28]	Kestrel	3	[1]	1	[1]	1 [1]	0612
30 [0]	Moorhen	2	[4]	2	[0]	1 [0]	0556, 0758
30 [0]	Willow warbler	2	[0]	2	[0]	1 [0]	9923, 0838
32 [28]	Raven	1	{1}	1	{1}	1 [2]	1351
32 [0]	Waxwing	1	[0]	1	[0]	60 [0]	0612
[28]	Linnet	0	[1]	0	[1]	0 [1]	
[28]	Red-leg Partridge	0	[1]	0	[1]	0 [2]	

#1 -- Members 1306, 9923, 1646

#2 – Members 8501, 1306, 1010, 9921, 0844, 1351, 0758

#3 -- Members 1306, 9921, 9636, 0639, 1351

#4 – Members 0612, 9923, 0639, 0342, 1351, 0556, 0758

#5 -- Members 0639, 1348, 0758

Brackets thus [], denotes figures corresponding to the previous [2015/16] survey for comparison. (See *Table 1* for correlation of registration number to members' names.)

Thirty-three species were recorded from forty-eight gardens, compared to thirty-one species from fifty-one gardens last time. From the 1,178 total number of bird week records submitted, 587 bird week records of other species are included, compared to 576 for the previous survey. The highlight of the survey was the sixty waxwings recorded in one member's garden in Astbury. Though not without precedent, they are not often recorded in the survey and certainly not in this quantity.

Moorhen and willow warbler were present in this survey, but not in the last. Linnet and red-legged partridge, recorded in the last survey, were absent from this.

Bullfinch was the most common visitor in this table and as it was last time.

Pied wagtail records multiplied by a factor of ten and appeared in twenty-one gardens compared to only three previously, to reach a position of fourth in the table from a lowly twenty-third last time and so restored normality. Grey wagtails maintained a notable presence.

Goldcrest records continued the increasing trend of recent surveys and visited yet more gardens to gain second place in the table.

Black-headed gulls and feral pigeons became more common.

Brambling and Lesser-redpoll record numbers reverted to more normal values after last time's virtual glut.

Nineteen members recorded the highest count for at least one species but one member had the highest count for seven species (only species count greater than one qualify for inclusion in this exercise).

The garden of member 1351 was visited by the highest number of "other species" with seventeen, closely followed by member 0639 with fifteen.

News from the Comments Column (Section "B1" & "B2" of the input forms)

Feeding habits

The following species were reported feeding on food sources below.

Chicken carcass - black-headed gulls.

Elecampane seed heads - goldfinch

Rotting crab apples - waxwing.

Apples - blackbird and starlings.

Sunflower hearts - sparrow, goldfinch, robin, blue tit, great tit, coal tit, chaffinch and greenfinch

Black sunflower seeds - nuthatch, coal tit, blue tit, great tit, chaffinch, greenfinch, great-spotted woodpecker and bullfinch

Fat balls and suet blocks - starling, blackbird, song thrush, jackdaw, magpie, pied wagtail, great-spotted woodpecker, blackcap and goldcrest.

Rowan berries - bullfinch, thrushes, starlings and finches

Holly berries - blackbird.

Coconut - goldfinch, robin and great-spotted woodpecker,

Cotoneaster and pyracantha - mistle thrush,

Silver birch catkins - tits, goldfinch and warblers.

Mixed seed feeder - nuthatch, great-spotted woodpecker

Hanging seed feeder - robin, goldfinch, jackdaw, magpie, chaffinch, starling, nuthatch and woodpigeon.

Niger seed - blue tit.

Sparrowhawk Exploits

Sparrowhawk's feeding habits included taking blue tit and chaffinch.

A magpie was spotted pecking at a roosting sparrowhawk's tail.

Disruptions to recording.

Garden building work and tree removal had a negative impact on recording.

Neighbour's cats have a perpetual impact on recording.

Habitual sparrowhawk visits and prolonged perching impacted in a similar way.

Grey squirrel activities served as a deterrent to feeding.

Behaviour reports.

Wood pigeon and goldcrest impacted with windows, though not fatally.

A robin had four eggs in a garden nest box by week twenty-six.

Feeding birds were noticed to disappear when buzzards circled overhead.

Regular blackbird visitors were noted to be absent for three days after a snowfall.

A member recorded his first song thrush since 2010.

Crows, jackdaws and magpies were noted to be harassing a roosting tawny owl.

A blue tit constantly chased other birds from a hanging feeder.

A coal tit busied itself burying seed from a feeder.

Weather Conditions

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

Table 5 – Weather Summary

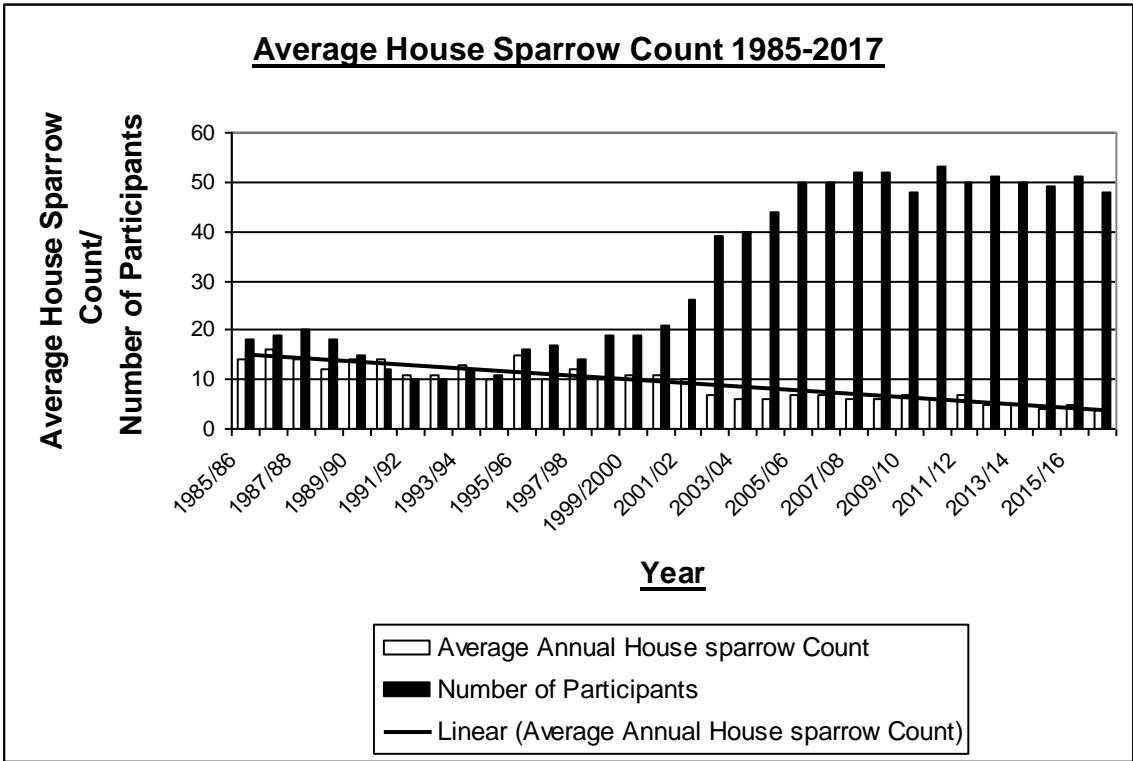
<u>Week No.</u>	<u>Number of Days</u>			<u>Inches of Rain</u>	<u>Temp. °F</u>		<u>Wind</u>		<u>One Word Notes</u>
	<u>Sunny Periods</u>	<u>Frost Snow Sleet</u>	<u>Wet cloudy</u>		<u>Max</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Strength</u>	
1	0	0F	7	0	62	34	Variable	Light	Cloudy
2	0	0F	4	0.06	58	32	NE-SE	Light	Cloudy
3	0	0F	4	0.45	57	30	SW-SW	Light	Mixed
4	0	0F	1	0.02	61	33	E-SW-NW	Light	Cloudy
5	0	4F	3	0.15	64	26	NW	Light	Cloudy
6	0	5F	4	1.54	48	21	NW	Light	Cloudy
7	0	3F	6	0.63	53	28	NW	Light	Cloudy
8	0	5F	3	1.38	52	23	SE	Light	Cloudy
9	3	6F	1	0.06	43	22	SE-NW	Light	Mixed
10	2	2F	5	0.66	53	24	SW	Light	Mixed
11	0	2F	5	0.30	48	30	NW-SW	Light	Cloudy
12	0	2F	3	0.20	47	30	SW-NW	Fresh	Mixed
13	0	5F	2	0.22	51	23	NW-SW	Variable	Sunny
14	0	5F		0.19	46	19			Cloudy
15	0	4F/1S		0.75	50	26			Cloudy
16	0	3F		0.30	49	26			Cloudy
17	2	7F	2	0.35	41	24	NW	Light	Cloudy
18	0	3F	5	0.91	43	26	SW	Light	Cloudy
19	2	7F	4	0.44	46	24	SW-NE	Light	Mixed
20	2	3F	2	0.09	52	31	NE-S-NW	Light	Mixed
21	0	2F	6	0.97	58	29	NW	Light	Cloudy
22	0	3F	6	1.11	51	28	SW-NW-SE	Variable	Cloudy
23	4	2F	5	0.61	55	27	NW-SW	Light	Mixed
24	3	2F	3	0.53	61	30	SW-NW	Variable	Mixed
25	0	6F	4	0.74	56	27	W-SE-E	Variable	Mixed
26	0	2F	4	0.31	63	31	S	Variable	Mixed

House Sparrow and Starling Research from the Garden Bird Survey Archives 1985 to 2017

Once more the two bar charts used in previous reports have been updated to include the latest data from this survey, which now extends over a thirty-two year period and are presented below.

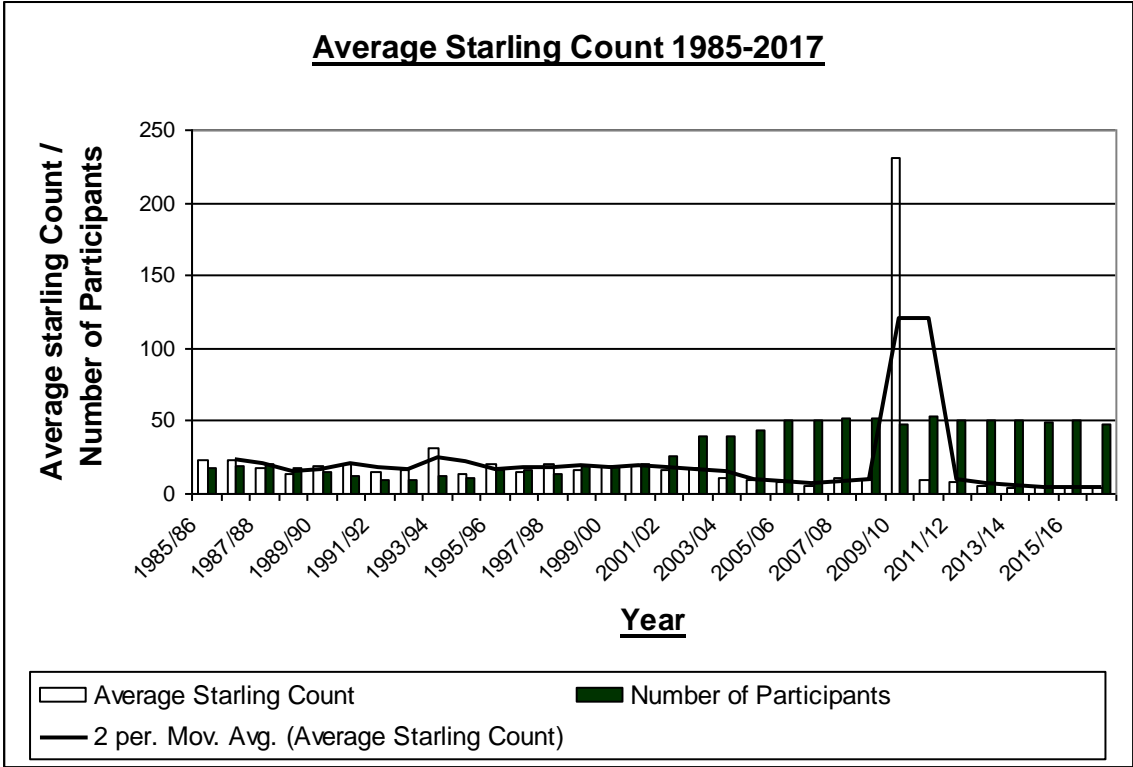
House sparrows

The average annual garden house sparrow count has continued to decline since the year 2002 and in this survey has returned to a lowly four from to five last time. Six gardens failed to record a single house sparrow during the entire period of the survey. The trend line on the chart shows that the house sparrow average count has declined from around fifteen in 1985 to four or five in recent years.



Starlings

The average annual starling count for this survey dropped from five in the previous survey to four in this, whilst in 1985 the average stood at twenty-three. Six gardens did not record a single starling during the survey. Once more the trend line shows a moving average one, rather than linear to accommodate the one-off distortion caused by a large roost in 2009/10. The overall trend continues to be one of decline.



This survey continues to show that there has been a sustained decline in the population of both species, which shows no signs of reversal. Though some gardens consistently have double figure records, it is particularly noticeable that there are gardens that though they enjoy a high quantity of bird records and high counts of other species, yet they are not visited by sparrows and starlings at all. Starlings are particularly attracted to fat based food supplies, so perhaps the gardens they don't visit are not so provided.

The data is contained in two Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, with pages for each year of the annual surveys, which can be made available to anyone who would like to perform more analysis.

The Next Survey

In anticipation and hope of your continued support, forms for the 2016/17 Winter Garden Bird Survey, will eventually be provided to all present members of the survey team. As before, those who take email distribution will be in receipt by that medium and the remainder will receive forms with the pre-season newsletter.

Do please inform me if you wish to discontinue taking part in the survey, which will avoid my contacting you needlessly at the end of the survey. I do need to know when I am in receipt of the full complement of completed forms. I am not able to commence analysing the data and preparing the report until I know no more forms will be received. Equally please provide encouragement to anyone, SECOS member or not, who would like to join the survey. As usual forms for any new recruits to the next survey will be available at the first club meeting in September or at any time by email. Though we hope that survey members will be inclined to join SECOS, it is emphasised that it is not necessary to be a member of SECOS to take part in this survey. The benefits of membership however include a programme of illustrated lectures at our Ettiley Heath meeting room on the second Friday evening of each month from September to March. On the first Tuesday of the month local bird watching outings by car are arranged during roughly the same period and monthly Sunday outings currently also by car to more distant reserves. Members also have access by arrangement to the club's bird hide on Rode Pool. Full details of the club's activities are maintained in an up-to-date state on the excellent web site secos.org.uk

For the survey, there are many benefits from using email communications, including saving paper, printing costs, legibility of inputs and easier record storage. If any further members are willing to receive the forms, guidelines and reports as e-mail attachments rather than paper copies, please let me have your e-mail address. Where I have e-mail addresses I assume willingness for this form of transaction, unless told to the contrary. My e-mail address is handt136@talktalk.net for contact and returning your completed forms. My postal address and email address are both included on the survey guideline document issued with the survey forms. Please note that the survey forms are structured to allow easy (though lengthy) input into the database, consequently records cannot be used if provided and formatted in a different way.

Finally I include the usual offer to anyone who wishes to perform a more detailed analysis of the 2016/17 survey data than is contained in this report (or previous reports). I can make all of the data available to them as a copy of the databases in Microsoft Access 2003 format, either as an e-mail attachment, memory stick or CD-ROM.

Again, many thanks to all contributors.

Trevor Clowes.

15th May 2017