



South East Cheshire Ornithological Society

Your local birdwatching group

The SECOS Winter and Breeding Bird Survey

Inspired by Bryan Perkins and Colin Lythgoe

Spring 2018 and Spring 2019 comparison

by John Thompson, SWaBBS Co-ordinator



This Spring/Summer SWaBBS fieldworkers undertook a breeding season survey for the second year giving us data to compare to that of last year. This document only covers the two periods in question.

In 2018, 1787 records were collated. For the same period in 2019: 1310 records. As ever, I am grateful for the effort the fieldworkers have made in visiting their patch regularly and submitting their records to me.

There are probably several reasons why the volume is down for the same period this year:

- weather conditions
- holidays / time available to visit patch(s)
- health of fieldworker, etc.

Also, one fieldworker didn't submit records for the 2019 period.

Six additional species were recorded this year and fourteen recorded last year were not seen for the same period this year. Over the two periods there were 106 species/subspecies recorded.

As there are many factors that can influence sightings on any day, it is far too early to make any assumptions as to why there are differences in species recorded and their relative status.

The table that begins on the next page compares the species recorded over the two periods:

- if seen in that period and at least one fieldworker recorded the species as 'Confirmed Breeder', a ✓ appears in the Confirmed column. If no confirmed breeding records, try 'Probable Breeder' and so on.
- A × appears where the species was not recorded during the period.

To avoid the table being too messy, I have only used a ✓ in the highest Breeding Category. For those unfamiliar with the categories, see the BTO list in the appendix.

I have included columns: -

- in the middle –
 - highlighting where birds were recorded in only one of the two years (the cell is coloured red)
- to the right of the table to indicate if
 - the breeding evidence is worse [↓]
 - the same [≡]
 - better [↑]in 2019

Lastly, I've included a column on distribution. Some reference documents / reports use the following definitions: -

'local'	occurs in up to 10% of patches surveyed
'thin'	from 11% to 50% of patches surveyed
'widespread'	in more than 50% of patches surveyed

Sparrowhawk			✓	✓	✓		✓			↓	widespread
Red Kite	✓			✓	x						local
Buzzard			✓	✓	✓			✓		↓	widespread
Barn Owl				x	✓				✓		local
Tawny Owl			✓	✓	x						thin
Little Owl			✓	✓	x						local
Kingfisher			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	thin
Great Spotted Woodpecker			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Green Woodpecker			✓	✓	✓			✓		≡	thin
Kestrel			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	thin
Hobby		✓		✓	x						local
Peregrine	✓			✓	x						thin
Jay			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Magpie			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Jackdaw			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Rook			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	thin
Carrion Crow			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Raven			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Coal Tit			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Blue Tit			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Great Tit			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Skylark			✓	✓	✓			✓		≡	thin
Sand Martin			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	thin
Swallow			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
House Martin			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Cetti's Warbler				x	✓		✓				local
Long-tailed Tit			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Willow Warbler			✓	✓	✓		✓			↓	thin
Chiffchaff			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Sedge Warbler			✓	✓	✓			✓		↓	thin
Reed Warbler			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	thin
Blackcap			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Garden Warbler			✓	✓	✓		✓			↓	thin
Lesser Whitethroat		✓		✓	✓			✓		↑	thin
Whitethroat			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Goldcrest			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Wren			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Nuthatch			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Treecreeper			✓	✓	✓			✓		↓	widespread
Starling			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Blackbird			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Fieldfare	✓			✓	x						
Song Thrush			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Mistle Thrush			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Spotted Flycatcher		✓		✓	✓		✓			≡	thin
Robin			✓	✓	✓				✓	≡	widespread
Redstart	✓			✓	x						local
Whinchat				x	✓	✓					local
Wheatear			✓	✓	✓	✓				↓	thin

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House Sparrow				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Tree Sparrow				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	thin
Dunnock				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Yellow Wagtail			✓		✓	✓			✓	↑	thin
Grey Wagtail				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	thin
Pied Wagtail				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Meadow Pipit					x	✓		✓			thin
Chaffinch				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Brambling	✓				✓	x					
Bullfinch				✓	✓	✓		✓		↓	widespread
Greenfinch				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Linnet			✓		✓	✓		✓		≡	thin
Lesser Redpoll		✓			✓	x					thin
Goldfinch				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	widespread
Yellowhammer			✓		✓	✓		✓		≡	thin
Reed Bunting				✓	✓	✓			✓	≡	thin

Comment: -

- I'm using the International Ornithologists' Union sequence (August 2019) to produce this list and it may differ from the sequence you use
- For the sake of brevity, I have not included in this document the background, methodology, etc. to the survey or the habitat, etc. of each patch
- Each fieldworker will have their own motivations for surveying their patch. Mine is to try: -
 - to increase the number of species recorded
 - to improve their status each year/period
- As the patches vary in size, habitat mix, etc. it would be wrong to compare one fieldworker's records to another, however an element of 'competition' is likely although unintentional

I am keen to improve the coverage of the survey, so if you or someone you know is interested in taking part, whether a SECOS member or not, please let me know. My contact details are: -

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Appendix

BTO Categories of Breeding Evidence: -

Non-breeder (single-letter codes)

- F - Flying over
- M - Migrant
- U - sUmmering non-breeder

Possible breeder (single-letter codes)

- H - observed in suitable nesting Habitat
- S - Singing male

Probable breeder (single-letter codes)

- P - Pair in suitable nesting habitat
- T - permanent Territory (defended over at least 1 week)
- D - courtship and Display
- N - visiting probable Nest site
- A - Agitated behaviour
- B - nest Building or excavating nest-hole

Confirmed breeder (double-letter codes)

- DD - Distraction-Display or injury feigning
- UN - Used Nest or eggshells found from this season
- FL - recently FLedged young or downy young
- ON - adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating Occupied Nest
- FF - adult carrying Faecal sac or Food for young
- NE - Nest containing Eggs
- NY - Nest with Young seen or heard