



## SECOS Winter and Breeding Bird Survey

SWaBBS  
(working title)

A supplement of **THE OBSERVER** to launch the survey

### Introduction

A local survey is planned to start in the Spring and you are invited to take part by **you surveying your 'patch'**.

My aim when planning the survey was for as many SECOS members as possible to be able to take part. Therefore it needed to be a straightforward approach. Also for the records submitted to be useful to the Society and the wider birding community. I looked at a number of surveys that have been done in the past or are still being done.

- ◇ BTO's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) - ongoing  
requires fieldworker to walk a specific route up & down a 1km square counting adult birds – 2 visits between April & June
- ◇ BTO's Bird Atlas 2007-11  
requires fieldworker to survey a preselected tetrad ( 2km square ) choosing the different habitats within the tetrad to count species and 'activity' status. 2 Spring visits & 2 Winter visits plus evening visit to record any nocturnal species
- ◇ RSPB's Volunteer & Farmer Alliance (V&FA) - discontinued  
requires fieldworker to survey a preselected farmers land, plotting species on an OS map – 3 Spring visits
- ◇ BTO's Common Bird Census (CBC) - discontinued  
plotting species on an OS map
- ◇ Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) - ongoing  
counting species using estuaries and large still waters

Colin & I decided to model our survey on the format used in the **BTO's Bird Atlas 2007-11**, but we have modified it to meet our own requirements: -

- fieldworkers choose the area they want to survey
- 3 Spring visits ( 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> July ) separated at least 1 month apart
- 3 Winter visits ( 1<sup>st</sup> November – 28<sup>th</sup> February ) separated at least 1 month apart
- (optional) 1 visit each season at dusk / after dark to record any nocturnal / roosting species

*That's no more than a couple of hours each visit, eight times a year.*

*If you already 'bird a patch', then you are probably already doing everything required to take part. Why not register and 'formalise' things and submit some of your sightings?*

Your patch might be an area you are already familiar with: -

- ◆ where you bird regularly
- ◆ a 1km square you survey for BTO Breeding Bird Survey
- ◆ a 2km tetrad you surveyed in the past – CAWOS or BTO Atlas

Please remember that you should be able to survey all habitats in your patch in two hours. To secure your patch, 'register' the area with the co-ordinator – early registration is recommended to avoid disappointment as we want to avoid any duplication of effort.

On each visit you will be asked to record each species you see or hear and count the numbers. Where possible you can also record any evidence of breeding.

For any 'inexperienced' members who want to take part, register your patch and speak to the co-ordinator. We will try to find a mentor / buddy to support you. They may be willing to walk your patch with you to help you get started.

As we hope that lots of SECOS members will get involved, in an effort to reduce the amount of paperwork and administration, please submit your 'returns' electronically – a Word/Excel file ( provided by the co-ordinator ) or type them into an email. Typed paper returns are also acceptable. Hand written returns will only be accepted **by agreement and in advance.**

Why get involved?

**Citizen Science** – the data you collect will be passed on to CAWOS and the BTO's (BirdTrack). Apart from being included in the Sightings Section of "The Observer", we could also use the data in a number of ways: -

- \* monitor changes in trends
- \* provide records for those supporting / opposing land use change, etc.
- \* maybe our own bird report, atlas, etc.

**Results will be published on the SECOS website**

We understand that the **CAWOS Breeding & Wintering Bird Atlas will be repeated starting in 2024.** So why not 'gear up' by taking part in your local survey?

If you watch birds and are 'mobile': you can do this.  
***Bins and boots on. Get out and 'bag' those birds!***

Fieldworker – **initially restricted to SECOS members.** After a given time, we will open the survey to non-members ( roughly half of those participating in our Garden Bird Survey are not members ) *but to fill in gaps.* Members are encouraged to 'book early' – use it or lose it!  
Patch – within the SECOS Recording Area – also west Crewe, Shavington, Wistaston, Wybunbury. If in doubt, please speak to the co-ordinator.

Paperwork – Visit Sheets and Submission Forms will be provided by the co-ordinator

If you have the time, energy & enthusiasm and want to adopt another site, please let the co-ordinator know and discuss which areas are not already 'adopted'.

**Patch Registration Forms are available at Indoor Meetings or by email from the co-ordinator.**

**Guidance Notes and other paperwork will be issued to registered fieldworkers.**

If you have any questions, please speak to the co-ordinator.

Co-ordinator/organiser: - John Thompson.

Assisted by: - Colin Lythgoe.

At the time of printing, we have 7 members registered and some of the key sites listed on the 'Where to Watch' page of the SECOS website have already been allocated. Ed