



SECOS GARDEN BIRD SURVEY FOR OCTOBER 2006 TO MARCH 2007

The Survey Recorders

This year the number of participants who joined was fifty-three. In the 2006 part of the survey records were received from fifty, but only forty-six were received for the second session in 2007. The last survey had fifty contributors and this time five new recorders joined with two contributors not responding and presumed to have dropped out. Eight contributors are not SECOS members, 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 recorders for this survey together with their registration number. Please note your number for the next survey.

Table 1

<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reg. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>
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
0107	Christine Howarth	0333	Alan Robson
0208	Stan Wildig	0334	Bill Bellamy
0409	Marie Turner	9635	Ron & Doreen Jones
0610	Andy Firth	9636	Geoff Yarwood
8511	Alan & Joan Soper	0237	Derek Leigh
0612	Alan Straw	0238	Tony Coomer
9813	John Thompson	0639	Chris Parry
9814	Colin Lythgoe	0240	Cynthia Cadman
0115	Megan McKelvey	0341	Howard Nixon
0316	Paul & Margaret Harvey	0342	Brian Sankey
9817	Lorna Pickstock	0343	John Fuller
8518	Ann Pym	0444	Carole Barclay
0119	George & Barbara Fisher	0645	Sarah Cartlidge
9820	Bill & Betty Brookes	0546	Peter & Sally Hough
9921	Barbara Hubbard	0347	Sylvia Jarvis
0522	David Braithwaite	0548	Anne & Chris Furness
9923	Janet & Peter Roberts	0650	Peter Beardmore
0024	Derek Owen	0552	Lillian Shufflebotham
0025	Alan & Linda Battersby	0555	Joe Avery
0026	Charles Hull	0556	Bill & Jan Fox

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. There have been two additional species since last year, a garden warbler was recorded in a Wistaston garden and a ring-necked parakeet, recorded at Edleston.

Table 2

<u>No.</u>	<u>Bird Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Bird Species</u>
1	Black-headed Gull	3	Blackcap
2	Blackbird	4	Blue Tit

Table 2 (continued)

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

The Current Survey

Fifty participants producing bird records over a period of twenty-six weeks could produce a maximum of 1300 bird/week records (50x26 =1300). 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 108 to 1192

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’

Rank No.	Species	Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 1192)	Gardens Visited (Number of Out of 50)	Highest Single Count	
				Count	Reg. No.
1[1]	Blackbird	1104	50	12	0610 & 0639
2[2]	Blue Tit	1073	50	20	0409
3[3]	Robin	1007	50	5	0612
4[5]	House Sparrow	988	47	37	0639
5[4]	Wood Pigeon	969	50	42	0639
6[6]	Dunnock	826	48	11	0334
7[8]	Great Tit	819	46	15	0612
8[7]	Collared Dove	814	47	16	0409
9[9]	Starling	709	46	150	9703
10[10]	Chaffinch	703	46	16	8518
11[11]	Greenfinch	608	42	25	9814
12[14]	Magpie	573	47	5	0237
13[12]	Coal Tit	562	42	8	0555
14[13]	Wren	526	42	10	0612
15[15]	Goldfinch	519	42	40	0238
16[19]	Long-tailed Tit	343	44	15	0612 & 0025
17[18]	Song Thrush	265	37	4	0555
18[16]	Nuthatch	261	19	4	0025
19[18]	Jackdaw	214	16	30	0026
20[17]	Crow	192	26	6	0612 & 0026
21[22]	Pied Wagtail	87	15	2	#1
22[21]	Siskin	6	4	3	0115 & 0025

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

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

#1 (Pied Wagtail) - Joint equal count between member registration Nos. 9813, 0026, 0238 & 0650

Four species, blackbird, blue tit, robin and wood pigeon had a presence in every garden of the survey. Collared doves usually achieve the maximum gardens visited, but not this time. Wood pigeon records maintained the gains achieved in the last survey and they were narrowly beaten to fourth spot by the resurgent house sparrow. The highest individual wood pigeon count however rocketed to an all time survey high of 42 compared to 20 last time.

There was little change in the ranking of species within the table and the top ten most common birds occupied similar positions as previously.

Siskin records crashed again having shown a recovery in the last survey. There were only 6 records from 4 gardens with a highest count of 3. This compares with 192 records from 27 gardens with a highest count of 30 previously. In the 2004/05 survey only 10 records were entered from 6 gardens, with a highest count of 2. Our visit to the Scottish highlands in February this year enjoyed warm spring-like conditions, so they probably don’t feel the need to travel south.

An elite group of 15 contributors from the total of fifty recorded the highest or joint highest count for at least one bird species. Usually the highest counts are spread across far more participants. One member recorded the highest count for five species, two members for three species and four 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-three species were recorded, giving a total number of fifty-five species recorded in this year’s survey {last survey fifty-six} 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’

<u>Rank No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records (Out of 473)</u>	<u>Number of Gardens Visited (Out of 50)</u>
1 [1]	Great Spotted Woodpecker	170 [198]	17 [19]
2 [2]	Sparrowhawk	131[141]	32 [29]
3 [3]	Pheasant	98 [117]	9 [8]
4 [5]	Mistle Thrush	81 [95]	15 [15]
5 [8]	Bullfinch	78 [72]	14 [14]
6 [8]	Tree Sparrow	74 [72]	9 [4]
7 [13]	Redwing	51 [30]	11 [4]
8 [6]	Jay	45 [88]	9 [8]
9 [7]	Goldcrest	44 [76]	12 [23]
10 [4]	Blackcap	42 [105]	11 [18]
10 [10]	Mallard	42 [47]	7 [5]
12 [13]	Fieldfare	39 [30]	9 [9]
13 [17]	Grey Wagtail	29 [22]	5 [7]
14 [12]	Rook	28 [33]	3 [4]
15 [15]	Treecreeper	26 [27]	9 [4]
15 [17]	Grey Heron	26 [22]	7 [6]
17 [22]	Tawny Owl	24 [14]	5 [4]
18 [16]	Feral Pigeon	22 [25]	2 [1]
19 [19]	Marsh/Willow Tit	21 [18]	2 [1]
20 [25]	Reed Bunting	19 [7]	4 [3]
21 [23]	Stock Dove	17 [8]	3 [2]
22 [11]	Black Headed Gull	15 [37]	5 [7]
23 [20]	Kestrel	10 [17]	4 [5]
24 [23]	Moorhen	9 [8]	3 [2]
25 [30]	Buzzard	6 [1]	2 [1]
25 [30]	Chiffchaff	6 [1]	4 [1]
27 [21]	Lesser Redpoll	4 [14]	3 [3]
28 [27]	Yellow Hammer	2 [5]	1 [2]
28 [29]	Raven	2 [2]	1 [2]
28 [30]	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	2 [1]	2 [1]
31	Garden Warbler	1 [0]	1 [0]
31	Ring-necked Parakeet	1 [0]	1 [0]
31	Willow Warbler	1 [0]	1 [0]

[] Denotes corresponding figures to the previous {2005/06} survey for comparison

Table 4 Ranking of 'Other Species' continued.

[25]	Brambling	0 [7]	0 [5]
[28]	Little Owl	0 [3]	0 [1]
[30]	Meadow Pipit	0 [1]	0 [1]
[30]	Red-legged Partridge	0 [1]	0 [1]

[] Denotes corresponding figures to the previous {2005/06} survey for comparison.

The "Other Species."

Garden warbler and ring-necked parakeet are two species not recorded in any previous survey. The willow warbler was not recorded in the last survey. Brambling, little owl, meadow pipit and red-legged partridge were recorded in 2005/06, but not in this survey. Redwings were far more numerous than fieldfares and they progressed to unprecedented heights in the table. Blackcap numbers retreated from last year's highs with less than half as many records, similar for black-headed gulls. Great-spotted woodpecker records retained last year's position of being the most common of the "Other Species" table. Goldcrest records halved to more normal levels from last survey's glut, and their presence was limited to half as many gardens. Bullfinch records continued at last session's relatively high level. Lesser redpolls were far less common. Mistle thrushes maintained the recovery witnessed in the last survey. The last survey recorded the first record of a buzzard visiting a garden. This survey has six records from two gardens. Sparrowhawks sightings occurred in yet more gardens than previously and easily held second spot in the "Other Species" list. Since the start of this century, sparrowhawks have, on average, visited more than sixty per cent of the gardens featured in this survey. It is now appropriate to promote the sparrowhawk to the "Listed Species" table to replace the siskin to save some inputting effort for survey members. Over the same period the siskin has visited only forty per cent of gardens. The next survey forms will reflect this change.

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

Carrying on from the last report, cats continue to generate a lot of emotion and cause some contributors to consider whether they should stop feeding when the result is often easy feline dinners. Woodpigeon, collared dove and blackbird feature amongst the victims. We had one incident where a woodpigeon was totally devoured over a period of hours. Clearly one hungry cat was nourished and no clearing up for me. A heron took a goldfish from a garden pond only to be mobbed by a crow, at which point the dog was sent to sort things out, but he showed an unhealthy interest in the goldfish, which was flapping around. The wife was sent to retrieve the dog and then the story lost credibility with reference to the fish receiving the kiss of life prior to being returned to the pond and turning into a beautiful frog! The sequel was that the heron returned on another day and had three golden orfe. You can't keep a good bird down. There were many reports of sparrowhawk hunting exploits, with few rewarded with success, but sparrow, blackbird and great tit were mentioned as casualties. In November a grey wagtail was observed taking a large insect in flight and mallard were seen to be mating. A nuthatch was seen venturing into a porch to search for insects in the roof structure. Much reference was made to over-flying buzzards revealing their presence with their plaintive call. Redwings were also observed, over-flying in flocks of up to two hundred. One feeding on a lawn was chased off by a grey squirrel!

A tawny owl pair regularly visited one garden, where a nest box was often entered for inspection purposes, though it was not used for nesting.

A woodpigeon occupied a bird bath for no less than thirty minutes, presumably a very dirty bird.

Redpolls were seen feeding on silver birch seed for extended periods.

Several reports mention goldfinch shunning niger seed in favour of mixed seed and sunflower hearts.

Blackcaps were reported feeding on camellia flowers and chiffchaffs on buddleia bushes.

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	0.58	65	41	SW-NW	Variable	Variable
2	0	0	5	0.67	63	41	SW	Light	Thunder
3	0	0	5	0.26	64	46	SE-SW	Moderate	Variable
4	1	0	5	1.3	63	38	SW-NW	Light	Wet
5	2	4F	0	0	66	26	NW	Calm	Brighter
6	3	0	4	1.44	53	34	NW	Calm	Variable
7	5	0	5	0.35	56	31	SW	Light-Mod	Variable
8	4	0	7	1.49	50	33	NW-SW	Light	Wet
9	7	0	5	0.27	55	37	SW	Blustery	Variable
10	7	1F	7	1.47	53	30	SW-NW	Strong	Variable
11	4	2F	7	1.41	53	31	SW	Moderate	Sunny
12	1	6F	5	0.08	43	25	SW-NW	Calm	Foggy
13	1	1F	6	0.88	51	34	NW-SW	Calm	Dull
14	7	0	7	0.69	51	35	W-NW	Moderate	Variable
15	0	0	7	0.76	52	35	SW	Strong	Cloudy
16	7	1F	5	1.22	51	33	SW	Strong	Gale
17	5	5F	2	0.26	45	23	NE-SW	Light-Mod	Variable
18	0	2F	7	0.04	48	22	NW	Light-Mod	Dull/Fog
19	4	6F,2S	3	0.65	40	17	NW-E	Moderate	Frosty
20	1	0	6	1.03	51	35	NW-SW	Blustery	Variable
21	0	0	5	0.47	51	37	SW	Moderate	Variable
22	1	0	6	0.94	53	29	NW-SW	Strong	Dull
23	6	0	6	0.91	57	34	SW	Strong	Variable
24	4	0	3	0.11	59	29	SW-NW	Blustery	Variable
25	7	2S	3	0.50	51	22	NW	Blustery	Variable
26	6	0	2	0.09	59	31	E-NE	light	Brighter

House Sparrow and Starling Research from the Garden Bird Survey Archives 1985 to 2007

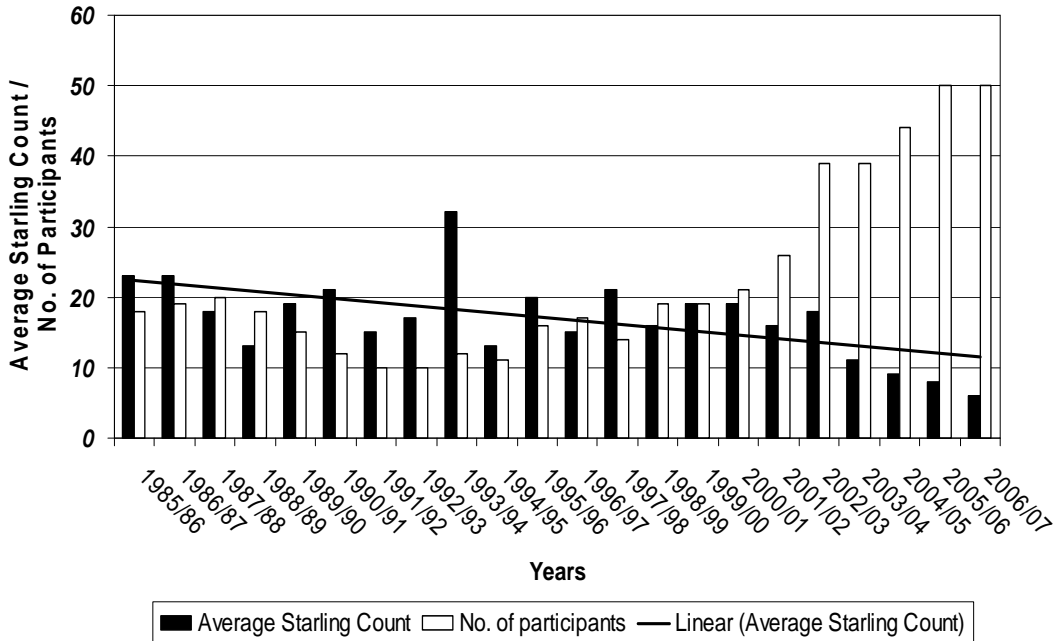
The two bar charts used in previous reports have once more been updated to include the latest data from this survey and are presented on the next page. This time the chart shows that the house sparrow seems to have stabilised at last year's value though the overall trend is still down. This tends to support anecdotal evidence that there appeared to be more sparrows around this year.

The starling's population however continues to decline.

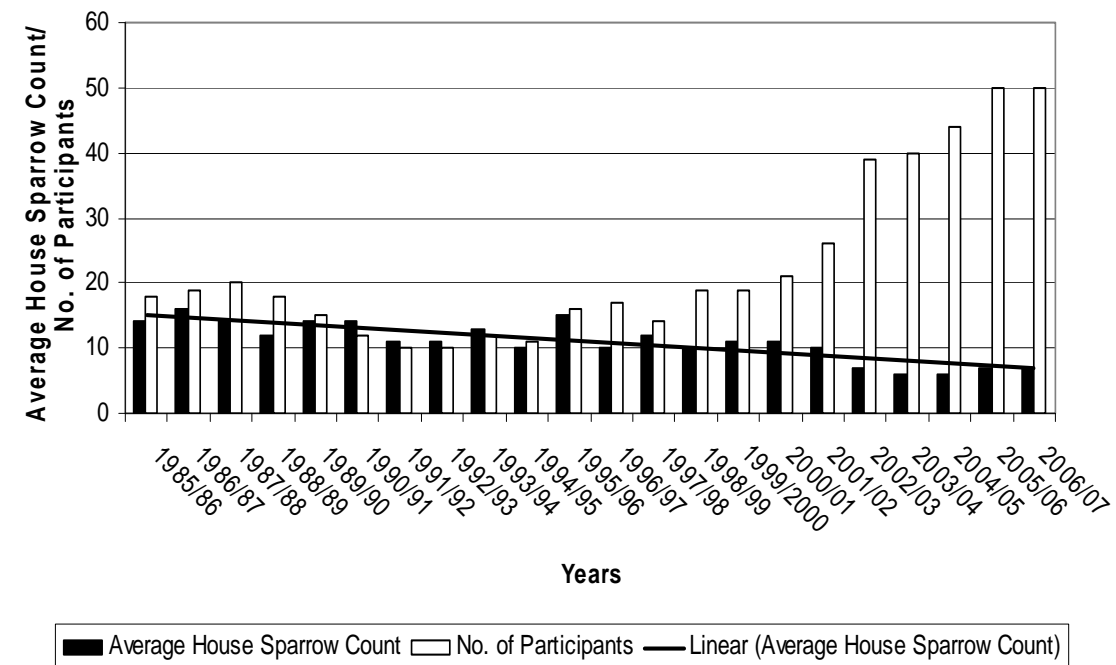
Our survey serves to support the general concerns expressed elsewhere.

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.

Average Starling Count 1985 - 2007



Average House Sparrow Count 1985 - 2007



The Next Survey

In anticipation and hope of your continued support forms for the 2007/08 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.

If anyone does not wish to continue, I would be grateful to be informed 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.

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 2006/07 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 Cloues.

21st May 2007