

Sewing, Knit and Natter Toft Garden Bird Survey Summer 2020

In spring, as the country went into lockdown because of the coronavirus (COVID-19), members of the Sewing, Knit and Natter group of Toft undertook a survey of the birds in their gardens. The survey was also taken up by family and friends both in the village and further afield, by friends via the Nextdoor Toft website and those running 'Toft 2020' who asked for the results as a record for the village.

There was a garden bird survey sheet to fill in during each week starting from the 22nd March, with the idea that it could be started at any time and if it was not possible to complete it due to any reason, it did not matter. The final results would give a record of the birds coming into the gardens of Toft to make use of the space for feeding, foraging, nesting roosting etc. The survey ended on the 3rd October.

Each week, when a species was seen in the garden, a cross was placed in the appropriate box on the form. In total nine households returned their results including one form beautifully completed with original and very colourful flair.

From all the gardens together there were 2,911 records. The number of species seen in each garden during the 28 weeks of the survey ranged from 19 to 33 and overall this worked out as an average of 27 species seen per garden.



A total of 47 species were seen across all the gardens across all the weeks and these are listed below.

Mallard	Grey Heron	Red-legged Partridge (French Partridge)	Pheasant	Red Kite
Buzzard	Sparrowhawk	Kestrel	Moorhen	Stock Dove
Woodpigeon	Collared Dove	Tawny Owl	Barn Owl	Swift
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Skylark	Magpie	Green Woodpecker	Jay
Jackdaw	Rook	Carrion Crow	Goldcrest	Blue Tit
Great Tit	Coal Tit	Swallow	House Martin	Long-tailed Tit
Chiffchaff	Blackcap	Whitethroat	Wren	Starling
Blackbird	Song Thrush	Mistle Thrush	Robin	Duncock (Hedge Sparrow)
House Sparrow	Pied Wagtail	Yellow Wagtail	Chaffinch	Greenfinch
Goldfinch	Bullfinch			

Of the species recorded, 6 of the species are recognised as summer visitors:

Swift	Swallow	Blackcap
Whitethroat	Chiffchaff	Yellow Wagtail



Several of the species recorded very much indicate the rural nature of the gardens. These included:

Red-legged Partridge (French Partridge)	Barn Owl
Yellow Wagtail	Skylark

Some of the gardens either had within them or were, close to water with the following species seen:

Mallard	Heron	Moorhen
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Birds of prey recorded were:

Red Kite	Buzzard	Kestrel
Sparrowhawk	Barn Owl	Tawny Owl

Of the above, the presence of Red Kite, Buzzard and Barn Owl in Cambridgeshire gardens is testament to much work done to protect and/or reintroduce these species nationally over the last thirty or so years.

The species reported as being seen in every one of the gardens were as follows:

Woodpigeon	Magpie
Blue Tit	Great Tit
Wren	Starling
Blackbird	Robin
Dunnock (Hedge Sparrow)	Chaffinch
Goldfinch	

This list is very much the same species that would be recognised as those expected to be seen in most gardens across Cambridgeshire particularly in the last decade or so. The list is also very similar to the list resulting from the Cambridgeshire Bird Club's garden bird survey carried out in summer 2016.



It was noted by one recorder that the birds became less easy to see, even appearing to have left the garden altogether towards the later period of the summer. This fits with the recognised understanding that not only do leaves on the trees make birdwatching more difficult in the summer but that:

- a) once breeding and bringing up of the fledglings is finished the young disperse leaving the gardens for new sites, and
- b) the adults of many of the species of birds seen in gardens (e.g. the robin) go through a moult (shedding their old feathers and growing new ones) and so tend to skulk and hide at this time as they are so much more vulnerable to predators.

It was also noted by recorders that some of the species brought their fledglings into the gardens. In particular Blue Tits were noted, also:

Blackbird	Dunnock
Starling	House Sparrow
Greenfinch	Jackdaw
Woodpigeon	Magpie
Rook	Robin

For anyone outside of Toft who did the survey, you might like to send the results to the bird recorder of the county in which you live, a list of whom can be found on the British Trust for Ornithology website. Also if you would like to continue to survey your garden through the winter, the Cambridgeshire Bird Club is now doing the Cambridgeshire Garden Bird Survey Winter 2020-2021. The details are available on the club's website. The survey is open to everyone watching birds in a garden in Cambridgeshire.

Thank you to all those who sent in their records for the Sewing, Knit and Natter Toft Garden Bird Survey Summer 2020 and for all the support from everybody at Sewing, Knit and Natter. With special thanks to Sally and Lucy.

Thank you.