**Trap Grounds Bird update March 2014**

This note was prepared for the Trap Grounds 2014 AGM by Tom Evans. It summarises bird observations from the following sources:

* Approx 30 birding visits of (30-60 minutes) carried out by Tom Evans during Jan-Oct 2013 plus a few in late 2012
* 16 birding visits logged by Diane Wilson during Feb-July 2005
* Bird records noted by numerous visitors on the Friends website from 2005 onwards
* Bird records on sheets submitted to the Friends during 2013-14

An updated species list is provided. These records are compared briefly with the previous summary of records, found in the 12th edition of ‘the Wildlife of the Trap Grounds’ and covering the period up to 2002. As there may have been substantial differences in observer effort between the two periods not too much should be read into apparent changes of status among some of the more elusive species, but some changes that are likely to be genuine are highlighted.

Some notable records in 2012-13 were:

Mute Swan – four chicks hatched in 2013; one died soon afterwards; three survived. The male was highly aggressive at times, and on one occasion had to have one wing removed from each wheel of a bicycle he had attacked.

Grey Heron – there were occasional sightings in the spring, and a juvenile was often present from later summer 2013 onwards, fishing in Swan Pond.

Sparrowhawk – a much-watched pair fledged three chicks in 2013.

Water Rail – frequently heard in the winter, with a maximum of 4 calling together on 8/1/13. They probably did not breed in 2013, given the absence of records between early April and late August, but they are elusive and we can’t rule it out. There was a probable breeding record in June 2012.

Woodcock – 1 in Polly’s Glade, 29/3/13.

Cuckoo – one on two dates in early May 2013 and another on 6 June. This number of records seems typical of recent springs.

Kingfisher – a burst of records in November 2012, then occasional records in December and January and 2 (a male and female) together on 23/3; then a gap until occasional records began again from late July onwards. A nesting bank was built so perhaps this will tempt them to settle next year.

Great Spotted Woodpecker – a pair bred in a prominent position over the boardwalk in 2013, delighting many visitors

Waxwing – flocks of up to ten on and off during late 2012, often on the planted Viburnums by the bike rack; last record on 6 January. Part of a spectacular national invasion.

Firecrest – 1 in willows along Frog Lane on 6 January.

Up to 28 species may have bred in 2013 – 15 confirmed, 9 probable (including a male Reed Bunting holding territory all spring) and four merely possible (Water Rail, Cuckoo, Jay and Long-tailed Tit). At least half a dozen Reed Warblers held territory, mostly in Swan Pond, but there were no reports of Sedge Warblers holding territory

Up to the 12th edition 32 species had been confirmed breeding plus three probable and three possible – a total of 38. Although these may not all have bred in any one year this suggests the breeding diversity at the site may have declined slightly.

The overall species list now stands at 88 species, with 75 before 2002 and 72 since 2005. 59 were recorded in both periods, 16 were only found in the first period and 13 were added recently. These numbers include species only seen overflying the site, as is usual for bird reports.

The thirteen ‘new’ species are Canada Goose\*, Cormorant\*, Grey Heron\*, Buzzard, Red Kite, Golden Plover\*, Common Gull\*, Stock Dove, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Jay, Raven and Waxwing. Several of these (starred) must surely have been present at the site before 2002 and overlooked or simply not noted. Genuine additions probably include Red Kite, Buzzard and Raven (which have recently become much commoner in the county) and Firecrest. The site may not have been as attractive to Waxwings during past invasions.

The sixteen species that have been ‘lost’ are shown in the main species list. Many of them are likely to still be occasional visitors to the site and will probably turn up again with further observer effort. The habitat no longer looks particularly suitable for Stonechat, Grasshopper Warbler and Whitethroat (a former breeder) but even these may still be found to visit. Three species that have undergone severe declines in Oxfordshire and nationally may be truly lost from the site – Turtle Dove, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Willow Tit

Several species recorded in both periods appear to have changed their breeding status. It is hard to imagine Red-legged Partridge or Pheasant breeding in the dense habitat now present, while the habitat still looks superficially suitable for several species of warbler that were absent or only occurred on passage in 2013 – Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler and Willow Warbler. Spotted flycatcher formerly bred but has only been noted once since 2005 – this is another species whose numbers have collapsed across the UK. Treecreeper and Linnet were both absent through the summer of 2013, and Starling was very occasional on site (though frequent in nearby housing). On the plus side, Jay, Green Woodpecker and Bullfinch have been regular in recent summers and probably bred in 2013, but were formerly only noted as visitors.

The codes in the following table are as follows:

BC – Breeding Confirmed; BR – Breeding Probable;

BO – Breeding Possible; V – Visitor (if not recorded in 2013, then the year of the last record is noted).

Species in green are newly recorded; those in yellow have not been recorded in recent years.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Status in 12th edition | Current status |
| Mute Swan | BC | BC |
| Canada Goose |  | V |
| Mallard | BC | BC |
| Teal | V | V - 2012 |
| Cormorant |  | V |
| Grey Heron |  | V |
| Buzzard |  | V – 2005 |
| Sparrowhawk | BO | BC |
| Kestrel | V |  |
| Hobby | V |  |
| Red Kite |  | V |
| Red-legged Partridge | BO | V |
| Pheasant | BR | V – 2005 |
| Water Rail | BC | BO |
| Moorhen | BC | BC |
| Coot | V | BC – 2009 |
| Snipe | V | V – 2012 |
| Jack Snipe | V |  |
| Woodcock | V | V |
| Golden Plover |  | V |
| Black-headed Gull | V | V |
| Common Gull |  | V |
| Herring Gull | V | V |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | V | V |
| Wood Pigeon | BC | BC |
| Stock Dove |  | V |
| Collared Dove | V | V |
| Turtle Dove | BC |  |
| Cuckoo | BC | BO |
| Kingfisher | V | V |
| Tawny Owl | V |  |
| Green Woodpecker | V | BR |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | BC | BC |
| Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | V |  |  |
| Skylark | V | V |  |
| Swift | V | V |  |
| Swallow | V | V |  |
| House Martin | V | V |  |
| Meadow Pipit | V | V |  |
| Grey Wagtail | V | V |  |
| Pied Wagtail | V | V |  |
| Wren | BC | BC |  |
| Dunnock | BC | BR |  |
| Robin | BC | BR |  |
| Redstart | V |  |  |
| Stonechat | V |  |  |
| Fieldfare | V | V |  |
| Blackbird | BC | BC |  |
| Song Thrush | BC | BC |  |
| Nightingale | V |  |  |
| Redwing | V | V |  |
| Mistle Thrush | BR | V |  |
| Grasshopper W | BO |  |  |
| Sedge W | BC | V |  |
| Reed W | BC | BC |  |
| Lesser Whitethroat | BC |  |  |
| Whitethroat | BC |  |  |
| Garden Warbler | BC |  |  |
| Blackcap | BC | BR |  |
| Chiffchaff | BC | BC |  |
| Willow Warbler | BC | V |  |
| Spotted Flycatcher | V | V - 2010 |  |
| Goldcrest | V | V |  |
| Firecrest |  | V |  |
| Long-tailed Tit | BC | BO |  |
| Marsh Tit | V |  |  |
| Willow Tit | V |  |  |
| Blue Tit | BC | BC |  |
| Great Tit | BC | BC |  |
| Coal Tit |  | V |  |
| Tree Creeper | BC | V |  |
| Magpie | BC | BC |  |
| Jackdaw | V | V |  |
| Carrion Crow | BC | BC |  |
| Jay |  | BO |  |
| Raven |  | V |  |
| Starling | BC | V |  |
| Waxwing |  | V |  |
| House Sparrow | V | V |  |
| Chaffinch | BC | BR |  |
| Brambling | V |  |  |
| Bullfinch | V | BR |  |
| Greenfinch | BC | BR |  |
| Goldfinch | BR | BR |  |
| Siskin | V | V |  |
| Redpoll | V | V |  |
| Linnet | BC | V |  |
| Reed Bunting | BC | BR |  |
| 88 | 75 | 72 |  |